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JPRS-NEA-87-054

13 MAY 1987

NEAR EAST/SOUTH ASIA REPORT

CONTENTS

ARAB AFRICA

ALGERIA

Lawyer Close to Opposition Assassinated
(LE MONDE, 9 Apr 87) 1

EGYPT

NDP Secretary General Discusses New Election Law
(AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM, 23 Feb 87) 3

Party Leaders Respond to Criticisms During Elections
(AL-MAJALLAH, 4-10 Mar 87) 7

SLP Leader Discusses Upcoming Elections
(Ibrahim Shukri Interview; AL-MAJALLAH, 18-24 Mar 87) ... 12

Wafd Leader Comments on Upcoming Elections
(Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din Interview; AL-HAWADITH, 20 Mar 87) 15

Wafd Deputy Chairman's Views Reported
(AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI, 16 Apr 87) 19

Daily Publication of AL-WAFD Newspaper Praised
(Muhsin Muhammad; AL-JUMHURIYAH, 27 Mar 87) 20

Report on African Summit Conference
(Sa'd al-Sayyid; ROSE AL-YUSUF, 16 Mar 87) 22

Butrus Ghali Comments on African Mini-Summit
(Butrus Ghali Interview; UKTUBAR, 29 Mar 87) 25

Military Spending Increases Debt Structure
(AL-HAWADITH, 13 Mar 87) 33

Pros and Cons of Establishment of Religious Parties Examined
 (Editorial, Muhsin Muhammad; AL-JUMHURIYAH, 24 Feb 87) 35

Briefs

Abu Ghazalah Invited to Israel	37
POWs in Iran	37

SUDAN

Foreign Minister Discusses Foreign Relations, Domestic Issues (Al-Sharif Zayn-al-'Abidin Interview; AL-WATAN, 19 Feb 87)	38
--	----

Al-Tayyib's Friendship With Al-Mahdi Alleged (AL-RAYAH, 19 Mar 87)	44
---	----

Briefs

'Umar Al-Tayyib's Status	47
--------------------------	----

TUNISIA

Foreign Minister Mabrouk Discusses Army's Role, Islamic Groups (Hedi Mabrouk Interview; AL-TADAMUN, 21 Feb 87)	48
---	----

Information Minister on Censorship, Banning of Papers (Abderrazzak Kefi Interview; AL-MAJALLAH, 4-10 Mar 87)	53
---	----

Fathia Mzali Discusses Accusations Against Her Husband (Fathia Mzali Interview; AL-MAJALLAH, 4-10 Mar 87)	58
--	----

Reaction to Palestinian Camp Situation Cited (Rashid Khashshanah; AL-TADAMUN, 21 Feb 87)	64
---	----

University Situation Described (AL-SIYASAH, 19 Feb 87)	66
---	----

Current Political, Economic Affairs Discussed (Nura Fakhuri; AL-MAJALLAH, 4-10 Mar 87)	68
---	----

Efforts To Regain Confidence of International Business Community (AL-RA'Y, 16 Feb 87)	75
--	----

ARAB EAST/ISRAEL

IRAQ

Major General Discusses Gulf War Strategies (Hamid Ahmad al-Ward Interview; AL-TADAMUN, 4 Apr 87) ...	77
--	----

ISRAEL

China Reports Significant Talks Held
(David Landau, Walter Ruby; THE JERUSALEM POST, 29 Mar 87) 81

Minimum Wage Law Passed
(Dvorah Getzler; THE JERUSALEM POST, 31 Mar 87) 83

Attractive Interest Rates Encourage Foreign Investors
(Avi Temkin; THE JERUSALEM POST, 2 Apr 87) 84

SOUTH ASIA

PAKISTAN

Minister Defends Military Loans, NAM Status
(THE PAKISTAN TIMES, 18 Apr 87) 85

Northern Areas' Demand for Representation Supported
(VIEWPOINT, 2 Apr 87) 86

Opposition Assembly Member's Move to Muslim League Viewed
(VIEWPOINT, 2 Apr 87) 87

/9987

ALGERIA

LAWYER CLOSE TO OPPOSITION ASSASSINATED

Paris LE MONDE in French 9 Apr 87 pp 1, 22

[Text] Master Ali Mecili, a lawyer close to the Algerian opposition, especially the FFS (Front of Socialist Forces) of Mr Ait Ahmed, was assassinated around 2230 on Tuesday, 7 April, as he returned to his Paris home at 62 Boulevard Saint-Michel.

According to the lawyer's friends, he had recently received several threatening letters. But investigators do not rule any assumption out.

Master Mecili, 47, father of two children, had just entered the lobby of his building when he was killed by an unknown person who fired at him three times. Hit by three bullets in the head, the lawyer died on the spot. In the lobby, investigators found three cal. 7.65 cartridge cases coming from a pistol of as yet unidentified make.

Master Mecili had left his office, located on Saint-Germain Boulevard, around 2000, accompanied by a young woman with whom he had spent the evening in a cafe on Saint-Andre-des-Arts Square, not far from there. The young woman accompanied the lawyer to the front of his building and then left him. Hearing the noise several seconds later, she retraced her steps and discovered the lawyer's body at the foot of the stairs.

She passed the killer in the building's lobby. Blond, wearing his hair in a crew cut, about 30 years old, the killer wore a raincoat and carried an umbrella. He left without running, apparently very sure of himself.

The friends of Master Mecili told us that the lawyer, who played an important role in the defense of Algerian militants in France, had received threatening letters.

Investigators however do not rule out any assumption, especially a settlement of accounts of a private nature related to his activities as lawyer. On that Wednesday morning, investigators from the homicide squad searched his Paris office.

"This is a job done by the Algerian Special Services, the regime's real political police!" This accusation is serious but Mr Ait Ahmed, one of the long-term leaders in the struggle for the independence of Algeria, accepts it, fully aware of what he is saying. As he told us on that Wednesday, 8 April, Master Ali Mecili--who had been one of his closest friends since they had been fighting together within the FFS, established by Mr Ait Ahmed in 1963, following his exclusion from the FLN [National Liberation Front]--was an opponent who was particularly bothersome to the Algerian regime.

"We had been afraid of Algiers' reactions for quite some time," Mr Ait Ahmed told us. "All of this phony democratic eyewash--such as the creation of a section of Amnesty International, a third League of Human Rights--is just part of a scenario," Mr Ait Ahmed told us further, before adding: "The Algerian Special Services can get away with anything. This is state terrorism."

One thing is sure in any case, after three weeks now, and that is that Master Mecili was the target of telephone threats which he had taken sufficiently serious to move out of his home 10 days ago. Master Mecili--who had left Algeria in 1966, 3 months before Mr Ait Ahmed escaped from prison--had then settled in France whose citizenship he holds and had devoted himself to the defense of all Algerian opponents. It was he who in particular had defended the 13 Algerians who are members of the Algerian Democratic Movement of former President Ben Bella, threatened with expulsion in October 1986.

This intention had been interpreted as a "goodwill gesture" by France to "thank" Algiers for its role as middleman in the affair of the French hostages held in Lebanon. After that, Paris on two occasions banned the newspaper of former President Ben Bella, AL BADIL, and the Algerian opponents were advised to take it easy. Several meetings were also banned and everything is happening as if Paris were systematically muzzling all opposition to the regime of President Chadli.

Master Mecili was the mainspring behind LIBRE ALGERIE, the newspaper of the FFS of Mr Ait Ahmed. The career of this man, who was a militant from the very beginning, can also justify--according to Mr Ait Ahmed--the assumption of an assassination by the Algerian Special Services.

Master Mecili, who had joined the ALN [National Liberation Army] at the age of 16, between 1958 and 1962 had been a member of the Algerian intelligence service. He resigned at the time of independence with an entire team of Kabyles since, according to Mr Ait Ahmed, he did not agree with the role of "domestic surveillance" assigned to this service. In 1963, however, he was returned to Military Security but was arrested in company of Mr Ait Ahmed on 17 October 1964. He was released after the 1965 coup d'etat, according to his friend, as a result of the intervention of Messrs Taleb Ibrahimi, the current foreign affairs minister, and Ait Chellal, the current Algerian ambassador in Tunisia.

In Paris, Master Mecili maintained contacts with everybody, including the Algerian authorities from whom he received emissaries.

EGYPT

NDP SECRETARY GENERAL DISCUSSES NEW ELECTION LAW

Kuwait AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM in Arabic 23 Feb 87 p 19

[Text] Dr Yusuf Wali, the Egyptian Deputy Prime Minister and the General Secretary of the National Democratic Party [NDP], announced, in an interview with AL-RA'Y AL-'AMM, that the decision by President Mubarak to call for a referendum on the dissolution of parliament, is the epitome of democracy in Egypt.

He stated that the new elections will differ from previous elections because they will be characterized by objectivity, achievement and awareness on the Egyptian political scene. On this basis, we will launch an honest election campaign with all of the parties because democracy will not be built with one party. Rather, it will be built with numerous parties. He stated that the party, following parliamentary elections, will move on all levels to nominate President Mubarak for a third term in the presidency. He emphasized that the NDP is in favor of a dialogue with the opposition in all areas. The following is the text of the interview.

[Question] What are the basic features of the NDP's party movement in the coming phase?

[Answer] The NDP is proceeding steadily with its new plan to implement its plans for the implementation of all subjects and objective policies through both the branch secretariats and the central subcommittees in the general-secretariats. The most important of these subjects is following up on the implementation of the recommendations of the party's fourth general congress which represents the general framework for the party's movement in this phase. It also embodies the primary basis and general plans for the next 5-year plan. The follow-up plan of the party's secretariats in the governorates is proceeding in an orderly, organized fashion; members of the general-secretariats are taking responsibility for this task by going to the governorates to be with the party's people in a real life setting in order to study the problems facing them, and to contribute towards their solution. In addition, for each governorate, a chart has been prepared on the basis of which party work will begin.

[Question] President Mubarak's decision to disband parliament came as a surprise to Egypt's political scene. The question is what are the motives behind this decision?

[Answer] Firstly, I would like to say that President Mubarak's decision to call for a referendum on the dissolution of parliament, is the epitome of democracy. The NDP is the originator of the idea to amend the elections law. The party took the initiative to correct the situation; the referendum is the constitutional right of the president of the republic, and he is the chairman of the NDP. This is an affirmation of the president's belief in bolstering the democratic process, strengthening it and his deep-rooted respect for the will of Egypt's people. It also underscores an important step on the road to democracy which everyone has sanctioned. In this context, the president found that it was his political obligation to give the people the first say on important issues in order to allow the application of the law because of the benefits that it offers to the people and their representatives. There should be no distinction between party lists and individual candidates and no citizen should be prevented from running for parliament. On this occasion, I would like for us to review together the most important advantages included in the new elections law.

[Question] But this new election law has provoked widespread debate among the opposition parties, especially with respect to the 8 percent [requirement]. They state that their party resources do not enable them to obtain this percentage. What is your response?

[Answer] The Egyptian legislature adopted the elections system of party lists with proportional representation in the selection of parliament members because of the advantages achieved by this system as embodied in support of the party system and freedom for voters to compare the principles and programs of the various parties. In this way the party which received a specific proportion of the total legitimate number of votes throughout the republic, reflecting its weight in society by virtue of its representatives in parliament, would be [represented] in proportion to the votes received by each party of the district level. Thus, all party orientations would be represented in parliament in spite of that. Some not affiliated with parties, and even those affiliated with them, called for the need to not deprive a group of citizens from the right to run for membership in parliament because of their mere non-affiliation with any of the existing parties. The election system of party lists for membership in Egypt's parliament has only recently come into effect, and has not been granted an opportunity to be applied for a period sufficient to evaluate and judge it in accordance with what such an application would reveal about it. That was the motive for issuing the new law.

[Question] Are there special features accompanying the final amendment?

[Answer] Yes, there are special features: firstly, the integration of the party lists election system and the individual election system in the election of parliament members in each district. Through this, the advantages of an election by party lists can be achieved without depriving citizens from their right to run individually for parliament as party members or non-party members.

Secondly, the elimination of the stipulation pertaining to the requirement that every party list include a number of alternate candidates equal to the number of primary candidates.

Thirdly, the announcement of the election of the individual who receives the greatest number of legitimate votes regardless of the manner by which he ran. As for candidates on party lists, each list will be given a number of district seats in proportion to the legitimate votes it receives out of the total of legitimate votes cast in the district.

Fourthly, based on the belief that women have come to play an important role in political life and within the parties, the allotment of one seat for women has been eliminated in some districts. These are the most important advantages stipulated by the new law on the basis of which, God willing, the coming elections will take place in the event that the people agree to dissolve parliament.

[Question] What are the NDP's preparations for entering the coming election campaign following the referendum?

[Answer] These elections will differ from any previous election because they will be characterized by objectivity, achievement and political awareness inasmuch as Dr al-Janzuri, the Minister of Planning, is currently undertaking the preparation of a working paper concerning the achievements of President Mubarak's era in comparison to prior achievements. The NDP will launch an honest election campaign with all the parties, especially because democracy will not be built with one party. Rather, it will be built with numerous parties.

[Question] What about the preparation of NDP lists?

[Answer] Regarding the preparation of party lists, it can be said that we are not beginning from a vacuum. The party has many leaders who are suitable for membership in parliament. Foremost among them are the members of the current parliament who are performing their tasks among the masses and in parliament with much seriousness, patriotism and party commitment. As for the new faces which the party will put forward in the coming elections, they will be announced on the lists.

[Question] Are there criteria which must be fulfilled by the party's candidates?

[Answer] Within the framework of the NDP's responsibilities, a group of criteria govern the selection of parliament members:

- One must be endowed with the principle of purity, commitment to the popular goals and principles of the party among the masses and adherence to them. One must have the qualifications and ability to give earnestly. While the NDP has, by means of these fundamental criteria, been very meticulous in its selection of its various leaders in its popular and legislative organizations or within

the party's organizational levels, it pays, with all the more reason, special and greater attention to its selection of candidates to run for parliament because of its special importance. This is due to the role undertaken by a parliament member in the legislative or supervisory field, or among the masses. From here stems the great importance which the party attaches to its selection of party members to run for parliament.

[Question] Elections for the presidency of the republic will be held this October. What are the NDP's preparations in this regard?

[Answer] The NDP affirms its great esteem for the leadership of President Muhammad Husni Mubarak by virtue of the principles and values which he represents, his sweeping popularity among the masses, his reliable word and his earnestness in his work as he directs his attention towards the people's interests, [putting them] above every consideration--all of this is a great plus which is reflected by the NDP's popularity. Henceforth, the party will move on all levels toward the great goal, President Mubarak's nomination to the presidency of the republic, in order to continue the course which he has steered, and to realize the masses' hopes and aspirations for a shining tomorrow under his leadership, God willing.

[Question] But what about the dialogue with the opposition?

[Answer] We are always supportive of a dialogue with the opposition in all areas. An indication of this is that the elections law debate has ended, and I, as an official, requested that it be referred to the special committee so that there would be a great deal of dialogue. As a party, we call for and recommend it. We could have not debated this topic after the debates on it had been concluded. We decided, however, as a type of dialogue, to present it to the committee. If the committee chairman wants to call the opposition to participate in the debate, there would be no objection to that. This means that we are not against dialogue. Rather, I would like to add that if the opposition asked to have a dialogue with us on any issue, there would be absolutely no objection from our side.

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PARTY LEADERS RESPOND TO CRITICISMS DURING ELECTIONS

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 4-10 Mar 87 pp 25-27

[Article: "Eleventh Hour of the Election Battle; Party Leaders in Egypt Respond to Accusations"]

[Text] Yusuf Wali: "The Opposition's Differences Have Been Exposed Before the Masses"; Fu'ad Siraj al-Din: "The Wafd Is Not Isolated and Has Not Abandoned the Muslim Brotherhood"; Hilmi Murad: "We will Ally Ourselves with All Factions in Demanding Reform"; Khalid Muhyi al-Din: "We Have Benefitted From Our Media Disputes by Expanding Our Base."

The election battle in Egypt has heated up to the point that the parties have begun heaping accusations on one another. The ruling National [Democratic] Party (NDP) is accused of trying to polarize the leadership and prominent personalities in the opposition and of fixing the election law in order to gain the advantage and put the opposition at an eight point disadvantage. Dr Yusuf Wali, Secretary General of the NDP has found fault with that, saying: "In as much as the NDP has an overwhelming majority in the Egyptian parliament, especially as its official membership exceeds 3 million Egyptians, there is no need for it to polarize this or that candidate. On the contrary, the opposition parties are the ones that are fighting among themselves in order to attract a simple NDP member. They must be tacitly admitting that the NDP is overwhelmingly popular, but they still quarrel lest they be exposed before their bases of support."

Dr Wali asks: "What is the meaning of the mass resignations submitted by members of the opposition parties? The opposition has replied to this question, but [must take] the responsibility for it rather than accuse the NDP. For the Egyptian citizen has become first rate in [political] consciousness and education and no party has the power to polarize it except when it is completely satisfied with the principles of this or that party."

The Secretary General of the NDP continued his remarks, saying: "The differences that have arisen among the opposition parties and their engaging in partisan disputes since the dissolution of the Egyptian parliament confirms that they have been exposed before the masses. What happened to the Wafd party, for example, in the 1984 elections was merely a stroke of luck I do not think will be repeated." In response to the charge in particular that the

election law puts obstacles before the opposition parties, Wali said: "How can that be while there are 48 seats designated for independents that the opposition parties can fill in total if they fail to gain the 8 percent required for any of the competing parties to gain a number of seats in parliament. Thus, would the accused NDP be the one that on its own provided two opportunities to these parties, either by winning the list or the independent seat? Likewise, 8 percent is not considered a limitation but instead has been set in order to establish the seriousness of the parties and so that each might have the extent of its popularity and supporters revealed. How often these parties brag about how much popularity they enjoy. This is what the new parliamentary election postings will demonstrate."

Wali added: "The individual election average that has been established by the new modification of the law means a distribution of the additional votes among the victorious parties. This confirms the desire of the NDP to expand the democratic base and to represent every orientation in the parliament."

The Wafd Is Not Isolated

Fu'ad Siraj al-Din, head of the Wafd Party responded to the charges against his party that it has become politically isolated as a result of its dismissal of the idea of a united front, saying: "How can the Wafd Party be politically isolated after its rejection of the idea of a united front of opposition parties? From our earliest existence we have been in federation with opposition parties." The Wafd Party chief asks: "How can there be political isolation when we have all this popular support in the streets of Egypt? It is not at all correct that the Wafd exists in political isolation. These are dreamed up hopes. There has never been in Wafd politics a fusion with a united position. On the contrary, that was a proposal that the party's supreme council found to be against the by-laws."

Regarding the charge against the Wafd that it abandoned the Muslim Brotherhood, he said: "The Muslim Brotherhood were never members of the Wafd. All there is to it is that the Wafd provided the opportunity to some of them to be candidates on their lists in the last elections. In fact, eight of them succeeded in getting into parliament by means of the Wafd lists. The separation of the Brotherhood from the Wafd was not submitted to the Wafd supreme council. On the contrary, Hamad Abu al-Nasr, the Supreme Guide, came to me and informed me that they had made their decision to ally with the Labor and Liberal parties and I wished him good luck."

Yasin Siraj al-Din, Secretary General of the Wafd Party in Cairo concluded the discussion: "The Wafd did not abandon the Brotherhood in the current elections. Rather, the circumstances of the Muslim Brothers who had joined the party and became deputies in the parliament required that they obey the will of their Brotherhood leadership and join the Labor Party and the Liberals as a legitimate conduit to entering parliament on the basis of the fact that they are the ones who adopted this decision, perhaps because they found that the Labor Party was able to give them what they want in the way of a number on the lists and the areas in which they want to be nominated. This was easy for the Labor Party because it sees its interest in allying with the Brotherhood so

that it might exceed the 8 percent it failed to reach in the last elections. On the contrary, [the Brotherhood] cannot demand what they want from the Wafd, because the Wafd does not need anyone's assistance in exceeding the 8 percent while abandoning its rights."

Not Political Opportunism

Dr Hilmi Murad, vice chairman of the Labor Party, replied to the accusations against his party of "opportunism" saying: "Any alliance between the political factions have a value in the course of politics, both sides making use of it because it leads to joining the voices and avoiding the pressure that exists to prevent them from obtaining the 8 percent. This is a dilemma that the government of the NDP imposed on the opposition, as the current election law, may it be damned, still binds the opposition parties to 8 percent. Therefore, the socialist Labor Party proposed an alliance with all the opposition political factions in order to stand in a united front demanding democratic reform."

Dr Murad reaffirmed his response to the charge, saying that the entire aim of the Labor Party in that is to broaden the position of the opposition inside the parliament by providing a chance to every political faction and so the votes would not be wasted and added to those for the NDP.

There have been many accusations leveled against the Liberal Party. Among them is that it is a party without mass supporters and it is the one that accepted 20 percent of the districts on the national level and permitted Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il, after his departure from the Wafd, to cause what happened inside the party. Mustafa Kamil Murad, chairman of the Liberal Party, replied to the charges: "Politics is a fine art and a sound concept. It is reality that dictates to the politicians how to deal with it and how to fashion something from it that benefits the people of the country. Reality is difficult, and forming an alliance is necessary in order to exceed the 8 percent. This step could not have been taken without politicians experienced in sophisticated political work. The programs of the Labor and Liberal parties and the Muslim Brotherhood are as one in regard to establishing a sound democratic life in Egypt according to the resolutions that were announced at the 'Abdin People's Conference last 5 February."

The Liberal Party leader continued by saying that he called for an alliance between the parties in the last election but this view was not heeded, with the result that the opposition parties lost 16 percent of the vote, which was given to the NDP. The Wafd was represented by only 12 percent instead of opposition being represented by 28 percent. That was because the other opposition parties, Labor, the National Progressive Union Grouping (NPUG), and the Liberals did not receive the 8 percent and they subsequently lost their votes. Shaykh Salah Abu Isma'il did what he did inside the Liberal Party. This is not correct as Mustafa Kamil Murad replies. Shaykh Abu Isma'il is vice chairman of the party, as Muhammad 'Abd al-Shafi had resigned from the Liberal Party. Shaykh Abu Isma'il did not expell him. 'Abd al-Shafi resigned because of his desire to form the Conservative Party.

[Murad] added: "As for the charge that the Liberal Party accepted only 20 percent of the districts, I say that percentages are approximate and politics is not chemistry or land division. Rather, it is issues that are approximate in providing guidance, and this determines the suitability of the candidate and his ability to get his electorate. The common principle among the parties is equality. The Liberal Party considers all its lists in all the districts and prepares its candidates. However, there will be competition among the candidates of the three factions in each district to some extent so that we may offer the best as the people's representatives. As for the Liberal Party's orientation toward the Muslim Brotherhood, I say that there is no economic party and no religious party, but there is a party with a political program to address the problems of the people of this country and touch on the interests of various groups and turn its attention toward the economic, political, and social problems."

The Pessimistic Party

Khalid Muhyi al-Din, head of the leftist National Progressive Union Grouping (NPUG), responded to charges that his party was rejected by all the opposition parties as it had reduced their opportunity to get into parliament. He said: "The party that joined together three political factions represents a strong party. A few seats were offered to the NPUG and it rejected them. It took up the challenge by entering the elections alone. In general, the conditions for the current elections are more difficult than the last elections, for the time allotted is only 30 days after announcing a candidacy and the districts are large. All the opposition parties are going through difficult times, not only the NPUG, although NPUG relies on the fact that it joined many battles on the pages of its newspaper, AL-AHALI, which enjoys more popularity than the Labor or Liberal party newspapers. These battles won us popularity. The experience of the last elections burdened the party, in addition to the fact that we cannot speak for the honesty of the elections, because the measure of popular support is governed by many factors."

The NPUG leader stressed that the Arab Socialist Nasirist Party will be situated on the NPUG lists and it can expect to be represented by the proportion that it holds a week before the elections, because "we have not abandoned the masses, despite the fact that the party candidates do not have faith in the elections. The conditions are the same as the conditions for the last elections. We will be listed independently in 6 districts and on the party lists in 45 districts."

Ahmad al-Sabahi, head of the Ummah Party, responded to charges that his party has no political or popular base. He said: "The Ummah Party was established and announced on 1 July 1983 and entered the local council elections the same year at the age of three months. It was able to prevail in three districts while the Wafd failed in the local councils. It mustered 90,000 votes in three districts. Had the Ummah Party not had popularity, the [Wafd] would have eclipsed us. We will enter parliamentary elections. And how does a three-year-old party enter parliamentary elections having no roots? This charge is a fairy tale."

Al-Sabahi rejected the idea of the parties forming coalitions. This in his opinion is a futile coalition, because there is no shared ideological base binding Labor, the Liberals, NPUG, and the Muslim Brotherhood. They have no party identity. How does Ibrahim Shukri, chairman of the Labor Party, put forth their candidacies on its lists when they have not registered as permanent members of the Labor Party and they have said that they have no party affiliation and have not registered continuously? For this reason the alliance is not a party action nor a political one. We do not join with failures because that has nothing to do with politics. They gather together out of expediency and in order to gain seats in parliament. They still have differences. Only the weak will come together in the elections. The Ummah Party is a political party. It does not represent specific factions.

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SLP LEADER DISCUSSES UPCOMING ELECTIONS

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 18-24 Mar 87 p 11

[Interview with Ibrahim Shukri by Najwa 'Abd-al-Hamid: "Ibrahim Shukri, Leader of the Last Political Alliances in Egypt: Yes, We Made an Alliance with the Brotherhood to Circumvent the Election Law"; in Cairo, date not specified]

[Text] The key topic in Cairo nowadays are the parliamentary elections and the most exciting aspect of this topic is the coalition, called alliance, between the Labor and Liberal Parties and the unlicensed Muslim Brotherhood which has triggered a great deal of political and legal controversy in Egypt. Najwa 'Abd-al-Hamid of AL-MAJALLAH's bureau in Cairo met with Ibrahim Shukri, leader of the Social Labor Party [SLP], on whose slate the tripartite alliance is running for election, to talk with him about everything that has been raised about this slate.

[Question] The members of the tripartite alliance have been accused of coming together primarily out of self-interest. The Labor and Liberal Parties sought to surmount the 8 percent obstacle and the Brotherhood had a bigger problem of surmounting the obstacle of its isolation imposed by the parties' law to keep it away from the parliamentary doors. What do you think?

[Answer] I think that for anyone to imagine that this unity was solely aimed at joining the election campaign to win some parliamentary seats is unacceptable. Our unity was a continuation of the road we had started on together and a step toward achieving our goals of correcting the democratic course and amending the freedom-restricting laws, including the electoral law that compelled us to follow this path. This depiction of the alliance disregards the fact that this is not a unique precedent in Egyptian politics. The 1984 elections actually witnessed a similar alliance between the Wafd and the Brotherhood, but none of these issues were raised at the time. The fact of the matter is that there are those who do not approve of and are uneasy about this sort of alliance which I know is something that had not been achieved for a long time and which is very significant and will have a great impact in the future.

[Question] The alliance's slates are accused of illegality and there are those who believe that they can be challenged or rejected, particularly with

regard to the Muslim Brotherhood which is not recognized by the law.

[Answer] The law is the law and anyone can challenge any breaches. However, the Egyptian electoral law does not, to the letter, prescribe that a person must have been a member of the party on whose slate he is running for a specific period of time. Otherwise, the National Party [NDP] slates could have been challenged in the 1984 elections when the SLP members ran on them without submitting their resignations or being crossed off the party's records. Likewise, the current slates can be challenged on grounds of including opposition party members who left their parties out of a desire to join the parliament. It is illogical to place restrictions on people's freedom and the arbiter in this case is the judiciary. As for the Brotherhood, every candidate that joined the SLP slate signed a party membership form, thus becoming a party member. We are not required to go into people's hearts to ascertain what ideas they hold. Furthermore, what were they to do if the road to parliament was closed in their face. We hope that they will be granted full freedom and the chance to represent all political trends in the Egyptian arena.

[Question] Whom do you hold responsible for the collapse of the opposition front unity advocated by the 5 February 1986 conference which brought forth the tripartite alliance only instead of the participation of the five parties in addition to the Brotherhood?

[Answer] The idea, when it was put forward, was merely a judgment. The main thing is that each party run on a separate slate. This judgment was motivated by the difficulties and obstacles the law created for the parties as a whole to keep the opposition out of parliament. This is not just empty talk. It did happen in the 1984 elections when the opposition won 27 percent of the vote, thus qualifying for a large number of seats, but the unconstitutional law gave it a 12 percent representation.

[Question] Who is responsible for that?

[Answer] I do not hold the Wafd Party responsible for the alliance's failure because it rejected it from the outset. However, every party has the right to have its own special calculations based on its circumstances in the election campaign. I believe that the success of the opposition conference on 5 February 1984 is something new and worthy of respect. We had hoped that this spirit would be maintained and we still have to agree on coordination between party slates and individual seats in various districts among all parties. Thus, we have achieved part of our original objective which is to expand the opposition base in parliament and to give the various trends that are denied representation by law a chance to participate.

[Question] A large number of your party leaders and members have resigned in protest against the way the alliance was made. What do you say?

[Answer] It was natural to encounter difficulty in realizing the wishes of the party's cadres and members with regard to slate nominations due to the need to coordinate among alliance candidates. In 1984, no one was with us and we still had difficulties that produced conflicts with respect to

evaluating the popularity of candidates. Hence, some leaders in some governorates may have felt that they did not have their fair chance of running for elections, particularly that competition is focused in reality on the top of the slate. We did our best, however, to give the slates a popular weight able to draw the votes and the truth is that a good part of the published reports about the resignations was not true.

[Question] Do you expect the SLP to win enough seats to render it the majority opposition party and you the opposition leader once again?

[Answer] We do not want to put the cart before the horse. The rate of Labor party success will depend on how the government, the interior ministry and the local government agencies conduct themselves in the election campaign. The rate will drop in proportion to intervention that may occur in certain locations and I expect the alliance to win a greater percentage than expected if the agencies follow a legal path in running the elections.

[Question] There is a fact to the effect that the alliance was forged between "disparate currents" with the aim of surmounting the 8 percent barrier. Will problems and differences set in after entering parliament?

[Answer] I believe that the alliance, following the withdrawal of the Wafd and the Grouping parties, has attained a more visible and more homogeneous state. The idea of the alliance was to include all parties which was not realistic. However, with the withdrawal of the Wafd and then the Grouping followed by the Ummah, I honestly believe that it has a greater chance for participation than any other alliance on the scene. There is a common destiny shared by three trends: the Labor Party, the Brotherhood and the Liberal Party. We all call for the need to apply the Islamic shari'ah in addition to our demand for democratic reform which is shared by the rest of the parties. Thus, the fundamentals of the alliance platform are better and wider than the platform which was supposed to include all Egyptian opposition parties.

[Question] What will be the situation be if judgments were to differ?

[Answer] In parliament, if an issue is put forth in the face of different points of view, every member has the right to express his opinions, be it for or against. This does not harm the existing alliance so long as the three trends share many other common goals.

12502

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WAFD LEADER COMMENTS ON UPCOMING ELECTIONS

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 20 Mar 87 pp 28-29

[Interview with Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din by Usamah 'Ajjaj: "Neutral Government Not Adequate Guarantee for Free Elections"; in Cairo, date not specified]

[Text] Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din, leader of the New Wafd Party, will remain one of the most important political personalities in Egypt, for he has succeeded in staging the Wafd Party's return to political life after an absence of over 30 years. He also succeeded in running for the 1984 elections about 100 days after the comeback, winning 58 seats in the dissolved parliament when other opposition parties, that preceded it on the political scene since the beginning of the second party experience of 1976, failed to exceed the 8 percent prescribed by law to join the parliament.

Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din, who is over 70 and has the vitality of youth, was able in the last elections to strike a "political deal" that worried the government by forging an alliance with the Muslim Brotherhood.

AL-HAWADITH met with him at his party headquarters in downtown Cairo to interview him about the elections scheduled for 6 April and about the party's position on them and the probabilities of winning them.

[Question] To begin with, we can point out that the Wafd has been accused by the opposition parties and those who follow the political scene of wasting a good opportunity to achieve a massive presence for opposition forces in parliament by refusing to take part in the opposition parties' unified slate. What is your comment on this accusation?

[Answer] In my opinion it is not right to accuse the Wafd of aborting the idea of a unified slate because the primary suspect is the current elections law. When the idea was submitted to the higher committee, which includes capable legislators and law professors such as Dr Muhammad al-'Usfur, 'Abd-al-Hamid al-Hashish and Dr Na'man Jum'ah, some of them were of the opinion that it was extremely easy to accuse such a slate of being a sham.

[Question] But some of them affirmed that the party reneged on an initial decision to take part in the unified slate?

[Answer] This is not true because there was no decision. The idea was submitted to the party leaders in their meeting at my home following the popular conference the opposition parties held in 'Abdin and I was associated with approving it in principle. A decision was made that the party leaders would go back to their parties to present the matter to them.

[Question] But some of them alleged that the Wafd's rejection of the opposition parties' unified slate was part of a political deal with the government, for instance.

[Answer] I believe that the political agreement with the government on the unified slate is a fairy tale and is completely unfounded.

[Question] One important question remains about who is responsible for breaking up the alliance between the Wafd and the Brotherhood?

[Answer] The truth of the matter is that the Brotherhood deemed it in its interest to coordinate with the Labor Party [SLP] and made no contact whatsoever with us before the door to nomination was opened. Mr Muhammad Hamid Abu-al-Nasr, the Brotherhood's General Guide, visited me at my house to inform me of their agreement with the SLP and the Liberal Party to participate in a unified slate. After the door to nomination was opened, the shift in the Brotherhood's position became apparent. The SLP gave them 20 spots at the top of the slates, a number that was difficult to obtain from the Wafd Party.

[Question] Then the Wafd is not responsible for the breakup of its alliance with the Brotherhood?

[Answer] Absolutely not. It is a matter of their desire to augment their presence on Labor Party slates.

[Question] To be sure, political action does not mean perpetual conflict with the government nor a permanent agreement with it which means that areas of differences and agreements do exist between the Wafd and the Egyptian government. How can these areas be defined?

[Answer] We differ with the government on basic issues and on general principles pertaining to the form of government and whether it should be genuinely or superficially democratic. We also differ with it on the current constitution because it is one that is overcome by a spirit of totalitarianism and was drawn up under a totalitarian regime that believed in a one-party system; did not support the power of the state; and did not appoint the state as the source of power. We differ with it as well on its unwarranted adherence to the emergency law and to the extraordinary laws that pose a constant threat to the people. This is in addition to our disagreement with it over a large number of domestic issues related to general areas. We agree with it on foreign and Arab policy, the only two areas on which we are in agreement with the government.

[Question] Accusing the government of rigging the elections raises a question about the opposition parties' motives behind such a premature charge even before the elections are held?

[Answer] This charge is based on recent precedents and is backed by what happened in the 1984 elections and the recent Shura Council elections. These represent irrefutable proof that the upcoming elections will not be free or impartial under the incumbent government.

[Question] What are the Wafd's demands for guaranteeing neutral and impartial elections?

[Answer] A neutral government does not concern me for it may interfere in the upcoming elections for the benefit of any party. The important thing in my opinion is the method under which the elections are held, regardless of who is in power. As for the demand by some for a neutral government, it is based on the assumption that such a government will not interfere in the election process because it will not be in its or anybody else's interests.

[Question] Does this mean that you are against a neutral government?

[Answer] I do not reject it and, indeed, I welcome it. However, it is not the only adequate and decisive guarantee for free elections.

[Question] Following the breakup of the Wafd-Brotherhood alliance, a school of thought emerged that the Wafd will win less seats in this election than in the 1984 elections. What is your opinion?

[Answer] On the contrary. I believe that the Wafd will reap many more votes than in 1984. A comparison between the circumstances of the two campaigns easily shows that the 1984 elections were sudden and came two months after the Wafd was formed and did not have the chance to complete its party framework. Moreover, the party did not have a newspaper which is now being published daily and serves as an important forum for the party's political promotion. Furthermore, we were surprised by unexpected tactics on election day.

[Question] This means that the Brotherhood's departure will not affect you?

[Answer] Definitely not.

[Question] Have you introduced any changes to the party's 1984 platform?

[Answer] It is the same one on which we ran in the previous elections and which will draw a clear picture for solving the problems of Egyptian society and the economic crisis and for supporting the private sector and treating the ills of the public sector.

[Question] In view of the fact that all party leaders are running for election, some of them independently, why is Fu'ad Siraj-al-Din not running for these elections?

[Answer] The fact is it is not a matter of winning the elections for this is within easy reach. The matter begins after the elections, namely parliamentary responsibility. I assumed leadership of the opposition in the pre-1952 senate and am well aware of the momentous task laid on the opposition

leader. I believe that my full-time devotion to this task will affect the party in one way or another. That is why I chose not to run. I am satisfied with the old and new faces the Wafd has nominated. They represent abilities and capabilities that can take my place in fulfilling the parliamentary role the Wafd is asked to perform at present.

[Question] Some believe that the new parliament also stands the risk of being accused on constitutionality and there are those who have challenged the recent amendments in the electoral law. Do you believe that the new parliament is threatened with dissolution as well?

[Answer] I believe so because some of the constitutional shortcomings in the past law have not been addressed and there are loopholes that have not been averted. The new People's Assembly is considered valid if the constitution says so.

[Question] In your opinion, which opposition parties are able to surpass the 8 percent limit and which ones will join the parliament?

[Answer] I hope that all parties will surpass this limit for this would provide support for the opposition in parliament which in turn enriches general parliamentary life and democracy in Egypt.

[Question] There are occasional reports of conflicts and divisions within the Wafd Party. How true are they?

[Answer] This is what rages within the hearts of rumormongers. The Wafd has been used to such rumors ever since its creation in 1919. Time is sure to pursue and disprove them.

[Question] You are constantly accused of running the party with an iron hand. How do you reply to this charge?

[Answer] You can see for your self that my hand is not hidden inside an iron glove. I believe that party affiliation is, above all, a commitment and as the leader of the Wafd, I am always keen on ensuring that all members are committed to this principle. Our party is democratic in the full sense of the word and its leader is entitled to nothing more than what is available to any other member.

12502
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EGYPT

WAFD DEPUTY CHAIRMAN'S VIEWS REPORTED

Cairo AL-AHRAM AL-DUWALI in Arabic 16 Apr 87 p 6

[Article: "Dr Wahid Ra'fat: 'Rightist Parties in Egypt Should Define Their Positions in Order To Be Able to Defend Them'"]

[Text] Dr Wahid Ra'fat, deputy chairman of the Wafd Party, praised the role the Wafdist opposition played in the last People's Assembly. He said that parliamentary deputies 'Alawi Hafiz, 'Abd-al-Mun'im Husayn, and 'Ali Salamah raised such heated issues as the Qasr al-'Ayni building project, radiation and nuclear reactors, and cement, and that they gave an example of the opposition's not being merely an accommodating opposition.

He also praised the widening of the area of democracy through the larger space obtained by the opposition in the recent People's Assembly elections. He said that the Muslim Brotherhood deputies, who were a minority in the previous assembly, have obtained a plurality within the opposition in the new assembly. This indicates in advance that they will go beyond the question of Islamic law to political, economic, and international questions, and that the question of Islamic law will be only a slogan, especially since the previous assembly gave them expertise and experience.

However, in the opinion of the deputy chairman of the Wafd Party, this does not negate the fact that falsification occurred in the recent elections. He said that it was inconceivable that the Wafd Party should obtain no member from Alexandria.

Dr Wahid Ra'fat added that the recent elections confirmed once again that there are no free elections in the countries of the Third World, which are separated from Europe by at least 100 years.

On the other hand, Dr Wahid Ra'fat aimed sharper criticisms at the rightist parties in the Egyptian Arab Republic. He said that they are still going after style in defining their positions on political and economic issues and are still living on "the glories of the past," contenting themselves with them. He said that these parties have to accomplish what the Egyptian left accomplished, clearly defining their positions, and that they must crystallize their thoughts and overcome the past in order to be able to defend their positions.

12937
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DAILY PUBLICATION OF AL-WAFD NEWSPAPER PRAISED

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 27 Mar 87 p 12

[Commentary by Muhsin Muhammad: "From the Heart"]

[Text] The newspaper AL-WAFD has the right to reprimand all the newspapers and all the journalists.

For the first time, Egyptian newspapers discontinued an old tradition they had continually practiced, namely, welcoming every new newspaper that is published. No newspaper wrote a word to introduce the daily AL-WAFD to the readers.

We all know that since the revolution of 23 July 1952 no new newspapers have been published, except for AL-JUMHURIYAH, which spoke in the name of the revolution during those days, and that the revolution closed the newspaper AL-MISRI, which spoke in the name of the Wafd Party, although it frequently was independent of it.

The closing of AL-MISRI by a decision of the Revolutionary Court, composed of members of the Ruling Council of the revolution, was a harsh blow to freedom of the press and a warning that every newspaper and journalist had to go to the limit in supporting the policy of the revolution.

The revolution dismissed journalists, imprisoned some of them, and forbade journalists to write for a time. All of that was a thwarting of freedom of the press.

Time passed...

The opposition newspapers came back on a weekly basis, with or without state support. Then the daily AL-WAFD was published.

There is absolutely no excuse for not introducing the daily AL-WAFD to readers. Even if the heads of the daily newspapers and perhaps their editors, or some of them, think that what AL-WAFD publishes is a great and serious overstepping of bounds and that its style goes beyond what is customary; and that there was thus a justification for not welcoming AL-WAFD or for cursing it and its editors and for lashing out at it every day, so that this became a

distinguishing feature nearly every day in the "national" newspapers, and in some of the party newspapers, too...

Nevertheless, the daily AL-WAFD came out during an election campaign that can be considered the first of its kind in Egypt since the revolution. Many parties participated, and among the candidates one could see members of the Muslim Brotherhood. Legally, the group had been dissolved, but the group's candidates were announcing their membership in it every day, and the government's sanction of this in the challenge committees was considered an indubitably democratic step.

From a comparison of the elections for the present People's Assembly with those for the Shura Council, elections which the opposition parties boycotted, we can see the difference between the two.

The opposition parties, which attack the government every day and accuse it in advance of falsifying the elections, did not boycott these elections. This gave them a vitality they had never seen previously. All of us remember how districts used to be closed for particular candidates and how others were not even allowed to run, with the government not even worrying about the form, and announcing, in spite of this, that those old parliamentary seats represented the democracy of the revolution.

The publication of a daily opposition newspaper, whatever one's opinion of what is written in it, is testimony on behalf of the present period, to the effect that amends are being made for what happened when AL-MISRI was closed, that it will not happen again, and that the government believes that freedom can be practiced only through multiplicity and opposition of opinions.

If the majority of newspapers are attacking the Wafd Party and its newspaper every day, this demonstrates the difference between the closing of an opposition newspaper, the arrest of the editors, and the forcing of some to take refuge in voluntary exile, and a government that allows this great measure of freedom.

It is witness on behalf of the government, and witness to the faith of their editors of this opposition newspaper and its party that they need not fear a dictatorship that has gone, never to return, and that they know that the sovereignty of the law protects the entire Egyptian people.

12937

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REPORT ON AFRICAN SUMMIT CONFERENCE

Cairo ROSE AL-YUSUF in Arabic 16 Mar 87 pp 14-15

[Article by Sa'd al-Sayyid: "International Conference on African Debts After They Reach \$200 Billion"]

[Text] The African event that Cairo witnessed last week was the meeting of the African summit conference's presidium, which is composed of nine countries: Congo, Djibouti, Mali, Uganda, Algeria, Zaire, Zambia, Sierra Leone, and Egypt, in addition to 'Idi 'Amr, the general secretary of the OAU.

The conference presidium is the permanent political apparatus that follows up the implementation of decisions and recommendations issued by the organization, evaluates current activity, and makes plans for the future. It holds its annual meeting in Addis Ababa. The convocation of the meeting in Cairo this year was an exception and an African wish that came on the basis of a suggestion by Conference President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, the president of the Congo, and was a recognition of the effectiveness of Egyptian diplomacy at the continent level.

The purpose for holding this conference was clear and specific: evaluating and directing OAU activity, setting its course in accordance with what the most recent summit decided last July, and planning for the work of the next summit.

Africa's Problems Are Pressing

The African continent faces many questions and problems, four of which stand out:

First, the economic problem: This was embodied in an unprecedented decrease in income rates in the continent last year and a drop in revenues from exports and imports, in addition to the problems of drought, famine, scarcity, desiccation, and locusts.

In this connection, the conference stressed complete commitment to principles of economic growth and development based on self-reliance. In his speech before the conference, President Husni Mubarak stressed an important point: urging the African states to give each other unconditional priority in trade and economic cooperation. No African state should resort to obtaining a

commodity from external markets unless it is difficult to obtain in the African market. Otherwise, African cooperation will lack one of its most important elements and components.

Second, the debt problem: At the end of last year, the continent's debts had reached approximately \$200 billion, compared with \$150 billion in the previous year. This represents 44 percent of the continent's gross national product and 190 percent of export revenues.

In this connection, the conference stressed the need to hold an international conference on foreign debts. It expressed its appreciation of the UN secretary general's initiatives to solve this problem. At the same time, it stressed the need for him to engage in continual consultations with the OAU on the subject.

Third, the problem of South Africa: As everyone knows, this is one of the most serious problems being raised in the African arena, with the racist authorities facing intensified international pressures to end the policy of racial separation they follow against the people of South Africa and the Namibia region.

The conference stressed that comprehensive and mandatory sanctions are the only way capable of bringing this regime to abandon its hateful policy. It urged the people of South Africa to increase acts of defiance, until the policy of racial separation is finally done away with.

Fourth, the problem of Chad: During the last 3 months, the situation has escalated in a new episode of the continuing story of conflict that this country has been witnessing for nearly a quarter of a century, especially after the country was divided into two halves in 1983: the first controlled by the forces of Goukouni Oueddeye, backed by Libyan forces, and the second controlled by the forces of Husayn Habre, with the backing of French forces.

Concerning this problem, the presidents of the countries and delegations addressed an appeal to all Chadian parties to reach a comprehensive national settlement. They asked Chad and Libya to resolve the conflict between them by means of negotiations and dialogue based on the fundamental principles of the OAU charter, especially the principles of the inviolability of borders, respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of states, and noninterference in their internal affairs.

Arab-African Cooperation

The convocation of the Arab-African summit conference in Cairo in March 1977 was a milestone in the history of the movement for Arab-African cooperation and a crowning of the joint cooperation between the two [groups]. Sixty Arab and African nations attended this conference, during which they laid down specific bases for joint cooperation.

In this connection, the state and delegation presidents reviewed the subject of Arab-African cooperation and once again asserted their confidence in this important cooperation.

On the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the first Arab-African summit conference, the conference asked all Arab and African states, with all their agencies, to use all their resources to stimulate African-Arab cooperation and overcome the obstacles that stand in the way of its development, so that the second African-Arab summit can be held without delay.

The holding of this conference was not merely an African meeting on African soil, but was a symbol of many ideas and concepts:

--This is the first time the conference is holding its annual meeting away from OAU headquarters in Addis Ababa. This is a recognition of Egypt's role and its African affiliation, and it happened without attempts at outbidding, self-importance, or looking for a "peg" for banishing Egypt from the African arena.

--This is the first time such a meeting has been held in Cairo since 1977. This is another sign of Egypt's resuming its African role, after having resumed its role at the Islamic and nonaligned levels.

12937
CSO: 4504/203

EGYPT

BUTRUS GHALI COMMENTS ON AFRICAN MINI-SUMMIT

Cairo UKTUBAR in Arabic 29 Mar 87 pp 13-15

[Interview with Dr Butrus Ghali by Mahmud Fawzi: "Peace Will Remain Fragile Without Comprehensive Solution"; in Cairo, date not specified]

[Text] Dr Butrus Ghali, minister of state for foreign affairs, affirmed that the African mini-summit conference held recently in Cairo achieved the desired results and that its most significant accomplishment is the continuation of dialogue among African countries of various political orientations for the sake of settling African issues and problems in light of regional and international developments.

Dr Butrus Ghali added in his interview to UKTUBAR that Egypt, as it celebrates this week International anti-Racial Discrimination Day, believes that security and stability in the African south represent a key element in guaranteeing security and stability in the African continent as a whole. Accordingly, Egypt will contribute to the "Africa Fund" to counteract the policy of aggression against the African south.

The minister of state for foreign affairs emphasized that another fourth or fifth year of drought will not only affect Egypt, but indeed all other Nile basin countries and that the only way out is to afford special attention to these countries whose interests are necessarily intertwined.

About Egyptian-Israeli relations, he said that Egyptian-Israeli peace will remain fragile and the only way to guarantee its stability is to work toward realizing a comprehensive peace and a solution to the Palestinian problem that would guarantee the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Dr Butrus Ghali, National Party candidate for the 5th district, also reaffirmed his pride in the trust President Husni Mubarak and the National Party place in him, believing that the elections in themselves present a real opportunity for anchoring the pillars of political democracy and overcoming the negative manifestations that have surfaced in recent years.

[Question] Dr Butrus Ghali, does the selection of Cairo as the site for holding the African mini-summit conference in the first meeting of its kind to be held outside its homebase in Addis Ababa reflect the African leaders'

appreciation of Egypt's role in Cairo? And what is your assessment of this summit?

[Answer] The meeting of the 22nd African summit office in the form of a mini-summit in Cairo on 11 March 1982 gains its significance from its being the first meeting of its kind to be held outside the summit's homebase in Addis Ababa since the establishment of the Organization of African Unity [OAU] in 1963. Moreover, full attendance by the presidents of all office members--save for Mali whose president could not attend because of domestic circumstances, and also Algeria-- not to mention the timing of the conference, the important topics it discussed and the high political standard of debates among African leaders, reflect Egypt's African dimension and interaction--in President Mubarak's era--with its African sisters and Africa's appreciation of Egypt and its leadership.

[Question] What about the Egyptian role inside the halls of the African mini-summit to solve Africa's political, economic and development problems?

[Answer] The mini-summit aimed at discussing the various problems afflicting the continent politically, economically and developmentally. Within the framework of Egypt's growing interest in joint African action, President Mubarak delivered his important statement before the heads of the mini-summit in which he outlined Egypt's unshakeable vision of the need to draw up a realistic timetable for the settlement of these issues, led by the debt question with its alarming dimensions; the question of apartheid and terrorism in South Africa; the current conflicts in the Horn of Africa; the need to achieve self-sufficiency in food production; and the establishment of a system to urge African countries to give top priority to each other in trade exchanges and economic cooperation.

President Mubarak emphasized before the African leaders the fact that Africa faces a momentous task that must be accomplished in the spirit of one team so as to counter perils and challenges, thus prompting the Congolese president, Denis Saso Ngisu, to proclaim, as head of the 22nd African summit office, the African leaders' full appreciation for the specific proposals put forth by President Mubarak.

[Question] What is the outcome of the African mini-summit and did it achieve all the desired objectives?

[Answer] Yes, no doubt about that. The best expression of the summit's success is its final communique which included an agreement to coordinate efforts and to draw up a strategy to confront the current situation in South Africa stemming from the apartheid regime's persistence in its odious racial practices and the refusal of the Pretoria government to implement the 1978 Security Council Resolution 435 concerning immediate independence for Namibia, and the agreement to support the confrontation countries.

As for Chad, the conference called on Chad and Libya to settle their differences through negotiations and dialogue in accordance with the principles of the OAU charter. This is a new characterization of the Chadian question as a Libyan-Chadian conflict rather than one among conflicting

Chadian factions, as previously perceived by the OAU.

From my point of view, one of the most significant accomplishments of the conference is the maintenance of a constructive dialogue among the African countries of various political orientations for the sake of settling issues and problems in light of regional and international developments and continued efforts to search for appropriate solutions.

[Question] Egypt demanded the inclusion of a special item on the agenda of the OAU ministerial conference pertaining to the fight against international terrorism in all its forms and the reconsideration of the call for an international conference to study this phenomenon which is a menace to world peace and stability. Do you view the activities of internationally-recognized liberation movements as terrorism of the same class as deplorable terrorist operations?

[Answer] Indeed, the Egyptian delegation in the recent ministerial meeting in Addis Ababa succeeded in gaining the issuance of an OAU Ministerial Council resolution commissioning the organization's secretary general to form a committee to look into this matter. The activities of internationally-recognized liberation movements cannot be considered as terrorism and cannot be compared to international terrorist operations which we reject in all shapes and forms.

[Question] Dr Ghali, what are the executive steps for establishing a regional peace alliance made up of Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia?

[Answer] It is not what some people think or what the question suggests that there are axes or alliances. Actually, our political contention is that Sudan's stability and security is Egypt's stability and security and Egyptian diplomacy is forever seeking relations of neighborliness and mutual trust between Sudan, Ethiopia and Egypt based on OAU and UN principles, foremost of which are respect for the unity, integrity, territory and sovereignty of each country and non-intervention in its internal affairs.

[Question] Dr Ghali, on the International anti-Racial Discrimination Day in which the whole world participated this week, what do you say while placing a wreath on the tombs of the martyrs of the South Africa Sharpville massacre whose 27th anniversary happens to be today?

[Answer] I say that history does not stand still and that the hour of salvation is near and the pure blood of African fighters shed on the field of heroism and martyrdom has not been in vain.

[Question] Do you not agree that the present regime in South Africa is incorrigible? So what can be done in the face of futile attempts to win over the white minority in the south through resolutions or verbal persuasion?

[Answer] Events and movements in the African south dictate that we arm ourselves with vigilance and awareness and that we monitor closely and study carefully whatever developments may arise.

The desparate and spurious attempts by the apartheid regime to improve its image in the world and to end its isolation are destined to definite failure because they will soon collide with the patent fact that the apartheid regime is incorrigible and doomed to extinction. This is the pledge that we have taken upon ourselves and let the Pretoria regime know that its acceptance into the community of civilized countries will always depend upon its ability to understand the facts of life and draw lessons from history.

[Question] Dr Ghali, what are the forms of actual support for South Africa and what can Egypt offer under its economic circumstances?

[Answer] Egypt, as it proclaims anew its firm adherence to UN and OAU resolutions on the African south, and departing from its firmly-established positions of opposing all forms of racial discrimination anywhere in the world, resolutely reaffirms its firm commitment to support the struggles of peoples and national liberation movements against these policies and declares anew its support of the Azanian people's struggle under the leadership of the ANC and leader Oliver Tambo and the Namibian people's struggle for independence, and calls, in particular, for the unconditional implementation of UNSC Resolution 453 on Namibia.

[Question] Do you think that the resolution adopted in the 8th non-aligned summit meeting in Harare last year concerning the establishment of an "Africa Fund" for solidarity with the confrontation states is a step toward settling the South Africa question and will Egypt contribute to this fund?

[Answer] Actually, Egypt welcomes the resolution adopted in the 8th non-aligned summit meeting concerning the establishment of an "Africa Fund" for solidarity with the confrontation states as a step underscoring the determination of the great majority of the international community to stand united in its fight against the policy of aggression in the south. Indeed, Egypt reaffirms its intention to contribute to this fund to help it achieve the noble goals for which it was created.

[Question] Dr Ghali, you began your African activity with the first visit to Khartoum in 1944 when you were a law student. Ever since then, you have followed Egyptian-Sudanese relations through "al-Shu'lah" articles. Do you think that the Brotherhood Pact is an alternate term for integration which failed to achieve its objectives?

[Answer] Both Egypt and Sudan are in fact nothing but an emotional extension of each other across the valley. It is an organic historic, geographic and ethnic link and the integration pact was merely an ambitious endeavor which, for various reasons, failed to achieve the hopes pinned on it. During Mr al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's recent visit to Cairo, our brothers, the Sudanese, offered the brotherhood pact which Cairo accepted with open mind and heart. And provisions notwithstanding, the constructive dialogue underway between the two countries and the lavish political will of the two leaderships are the most significant factor in translating and incarnating the ties and relations binding the two people of the Nile Valley in each of Sudan and Egypt.

[Question] Many people are unaware that your doctoral dissertation in 1949 in

Paris was about regional organization, the Arab League specifically. Has the Arab League, in your opinion, been able to perform its role away from Cairo?

[Answer] I believe that all Arab forces of various political orientations and social structures--be it at the level of regimes, popular organizations, parties or movements--agree that the Arab nation is suffering a multi-dimensional ebb of alarming proportions embodying a "historical dilemma" that requires the mobilization of all forces with a national perspective and a mass effort to overcome it locally, regionally and internationally.

Notwithstanding the pretenses that led to Egypt's exclusion or absence from the Arab League, the backbone of the Arab world, the outcome was that dilemma afflicting joint Arab action despite the fact that Egypt, on its part, did not spare any effort in fulfilling its historic role in trying to crystallize a unified Arab vision and position. I hope that the Arabs will not fail to see that their interest lies in putting a stop to the phenomenon of division and to putting Arab-Arab conflicts and differences above their original struggle with foreign designs and backwardness.

[Question] It is often said that Dr Butrus Ghali is partial to Africa. What do you say to that?

[Answer] (Laughing) The Egyptian strategy's deep interest in African relations is not based solely on one choice, but is rather a strategic option based on the interlink between national security and African security, not to mention considerations of Egyptian interest in working for the development and growth of all forms of relations with African countries and the strengthening of the bonds of friendship and cooperation with all the peoples of the continent.

[Question] You said once that future tensions in the region will be generated by the Nile waters and not because of political reasons. There are those who claim that the water stored in the High Dam is barely enough for our needs for another year and that another fourth or fifth year of drought will have a central impact on Egypt. What, in your opinion, is the solution?

[Answer] The Nile water is our life and is the only practical potential for growth. It is the present and the whole future. It is certain that a fourth or fifth year of drought in Africa will not affect Egypt alone, but all the Nile basin countries as well. Solutions Egyptian diplomacy is trying to find to these potential difficulties center around affording special attention to Nile basin countries in view of the organic link between us and our intertwined vital interests. These countries are Sudan, Uganda, Tanzania, Ethiopia, Kenya, Zaire, Rwanda, Burundi and Egypt.

Egyptian diplomacy is also seeking to bolster dialogue and political cooperation between us and these countries through constant meetings within the framework of "Andogo," which means "brotherhood" in Swahili, so as to create a proper environment for cooperation and joint coordination on the ideal way to utilize the Nile water and to set up related projects within the framework of carefully-prepared studies aimed at realizing the interests and respecting the rights of all. Furthermore, it will seek to obtain

international financial backing and cooperation through the UN and other specialized international organizations to conduct the necessary studies for joint projects such as dams and other things.

[Question] Dr Ghali, in all sincerity, does it not bother Egypt that a large number of African countries have resumed relations with Israel following the peace treaty and that Israeli economic aid has begun pouring into them? And is there an Egyptian presence to counteract this situation?

[Answer] First of all, there are not, as some imagine, a large number of African countries that have resumed relations with Israel following the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. Moreover, Africa has maintained its commitment to support legitimate Arab rights that center around Israeli withdrawal from all occupied Arab territory, the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and to set up a state of their own and support for holding an international peace conference with the participation of all parties, including the PLO--the legitimate leadership of the Palestinian people--a position recently underscored in the final communique issued by the mini-summit in Cairo, as I have already explained.

A good example of that is that the Ivory Coast, which had set up an embassy in Jerusalem, has responded to our quiet diplomacy and efforts by Morocco by moving its embassy to Tel-Aviv in support of Arab rights in Jerusalem.

[Question] Eight years have passed since the signing of the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty. What is your assessment of Egyptian-Israeli relations and the peace process?

[Answer] The fact is that the past years cannot be assessed properly within the narrow perspective of Egyptian-Israeli relations because the Egyptian-Israeli peace treaty is part of a broader and more universal framework dealing with the Arab-Israeli conflict in general. Israel's failure to move positively toward a solution to the Palestinian problem and its persistent aggressive and high-handed practices in the occupied Arab territories aimed at ascertaining illegitimate Israeli presence represent a stumbling block to the peace process. Hence, it cannot be said that the final assessment of the past years is positive. Indeed, the Egyptian-Israeli peace will remain fragile and lack the guarantees of stability unless a just and comprehensive peace for all parties is achieved and the Palestinian problem solved in a way that guarantees the inalienable rights of the Palestinian people, including their right to self-determination. Nonetheless, Egypt will continue its efforts with all concerned parties to push the peace process forward with optimism and confidence, whatever the difficulties.

[Question] Those who have followed Egyptian policy since the time of Muhammad 'Ali find that your family has been on the cutting edge of Egyptian diplomacy and is almost the only Christian family to continue its national work without stop, beginning with Master [i.e., mu'allim] Ghali, minister of finance in Muhammad 'Ali's era; Ghali Naruz, director of royal property; Butrus Ghali, prime minister; Wasif Ghali, foreign minister; and the list goes on. Did the family's diplomatic legacy push you to this position or was it your political ambitions?

[Answer] Perhaps my belonging to a family whose members, generation after generation, have taken great interest in national action, general culture and foreign languages has something to do with that. My political ambitions are confined to serving my country in any place and at any time, be it in my capacity as a university professor or my membership and duties in several committees and international conferences as a journalist and a party official. When the party leadership asks me to run for the People's Assembly for the 5th district where I lived with my forefathers, I consider it an honor and a privilege to serve the people of the district and the country as a whole.

[Question] Dr Ghali, what does your nomination on the National Party slate for the 15th district mean and how do you envisage the relationship between your role as a parliamentarian and as one of the Egyptian decision-makers in foreign policy?

[Answer] My nomination at this important stage of national action, be it at the domestic or foreign level, represents a cherished trust President Husni Mubarak and the National Party place in me. I fully believe that the upcoming elections represent a true opportunity for implanting the pillars of political democracy and transcending the negative manifestations of past years. Furthermore, the elections give a chance to all those who are able to be in public service to come forward to undertake urgent national tasks represented in the modernization of the societal and administrative structure. There is no doubt that the relationship between committee membership and the conduct of foreign policy is very close, for parliament is a popular diplomatic agency in modern times and foreign policy is a tool for serving the objectives of internal structure. The two jobs are greatly intertwined. On the other hand, I am a member of the general secretariat of the National Party and have been often charged by the party leadership with several party tasks internally and externally.

Dr Butrus Ghali In a Few Lines

-- Born in Cairo on 14 November 1922.

-- Minister of state for foreign affairs since 1977.

-- Obtained a law degree from Cairo University in 1946 and one in advanced studies in special law from the University of Paris in 1947; a degree in advanced economic studies from the University of Paris in 1948; a degree in political science from the same university in 1949 and a doctorate degree in international law from the University of Paris in 1949.

-- Head of the Political Science Department, Cairo University, 1949 to 1977.

-- Head of the AL-AHRAM Center for Political and Strategic Studies in 1975.

-- Head of the African Association for Political Science in 1980.

-- Head of the International Law Institute, 1985-87.

- Participated in numerous international conferences all over the world.
- Most famous writings in foreign languages: "The Problem of the Suez Canal" in 1957 and "Egypt and the United Nations."
- Has written numerous books in the Arabic language, most notable of which are: "Soviet Peace in Eastern Europe," "African Constitutions," "International Organization," "Studies in Political Doctrines," "The Organization of African Unity," "The Crisis of Arab Diplomacy," "Politics and Development in Africa" and "Arab Issues."

12502
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EGYPT

MILITARY SPENDING INCREASES DEBT STRUCTURE

London AL-HAWADITH in Arabic 13 Mar 87 p 43

[Article: "Egypt: The Strengthening of the Army Despite the Economic Troubles"]

[Text] The year 1986 was a bad fiscal year for the Egyptian economy. At the same time as the burdens of foreign debt servicing were increasing, the collapse of the world price of oil, of which Egypt exports annually about 10 million tons, resulted in a serious loss of revenues in foreign currency. Informed banking sources in Cairo say that the reserve of the Central Bank, which usually fluctuates between 700 and 800 million dollars, enough for its import requirements for at least 3 weeks, now covers funding requirements for only one week.

The delay in paying installments of foreign debts that are due, which in the past varied between 6 and 7 months, now exceeds 12 months.

On another front, more foreign banks have stopped funding big projects in Egypt, just as they no longer guarantee the refinancing operations of the Egyptian banks themselves. The productivity of certain factories in the public sector has begun to be affected by the fact that the government has stopped providing them with the hard currency necessary to import the primary goods necessary for production. As for the private sector, which is dynamic and well-run, it has resorted to the free market to buy the hard currency necessary for its imports and has begun to set the prices of its products according to the costs of these currencies.

The great exception to the government policy of austerity is the army, whose weapons and structures are still continually being modernized. Last January, the army received 12 Mirage-2000 jets of the 20 that were ordered from France and received two radar jets O-2-C of the five that it bought from the United States.

The policy of modernizing the army has increased Egypt's military debts to 4.6 billion dollars. The interest on these debts is relatively high at about 11.5 percent, a fact that is a source of concern to Egyptian officials, since the annual servicing of Egypt's military debt to the U.S. is about 700 million

dollars, or about equal to the total American non-military assistance to Egypt, which is estimated at 800 million dollars annually!

This fact has prompted the Egyptian government to ask Washington to decrease interest rates on the military debt to 7.4 percent, or the current level. However, Washington has so far refused to respond to the Egyptian request.

Certain informed sources in Cairo say that the Americans have responded to this proposal with two counterproposals: either the payment of 4.6 billion dollars immediately or postponing all payments until the year 2000. It appears that the second American proposal, despite the fact that it seems attractive, means that Egypt would be forced to pay three times the amount of its current military debt at the beginning of the year 2000, or about 15 billion dollars, instead of the current 4.6 billion dollars. President Mubarak has announced that he cannot accept such a solution, which would entail "incredible consequences on the shoulders of future generations."

13292
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PROS AND CONS OF ESTABLISHMENT OF RELIGIOUS PARTIES EXAMINED

Cairo AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 24 Feb 87 p 12

[Editorial by Muhsin Muhammad: "From the Heart"]

[Text] The Muslim Brotherhood and religious groups such as al-Jihad and others, the Naserists, and the Communists cannot quickly adjust to the decision to disband parliament. It is said that they are all in a state of confusion because the referendum and decision to disband came suddenly, before they could make a decision to join this or that party. Moreover, it is said that the state of confusion embraces all of the opposition parties as a result of the element of surprise. These parties were thus unable to agree on entering the campaign on a united list. It was said that there is an agreement, or a previous plan, for an agreement concerning this.

The truth is that the Brotherhood, the religious groups, the Naserists and the Communists are not to blame when they move from one party to another. Regardless of their religious activities, these parties are illegal because the state is waging a war against the communist call. The state also completely rejects the establishment of parties on a religious basis in accordance with Egypt's circumstances and the Party law.

The state may be correct in its policy because it believes that the establishment of an Islamic party will lead to the establishment of a Coptic party. Maybe even the Jewish Community would feel that with normalization the time has come to establish a Jewish party! That would lead to religious conflict. Likewise, a communist party would lead to a class struggle.

Regardless of the state's opinion on this matter, reality says that these illegal parties exist, and that they have members and followers irrespective of their numbers which vary from group to group and from party to party. Therefore, the time has come to make a final decision. There is no delaying a decision with regard to the establishment or non-establishment of these parties. That is to say, will the establishment of these organizations, groups and ideologies as parties someday be permitted, or is the position of the state with respect to them one of final rejection to the point that these ideologies are actually incorporated into an existing legal party, or are transformed into a party which takes legal action against the state as did the Ummah Party!

The transfer from party to party in search of legitimacy will continue, and the struggle within these parties to define their ideology in light of the recent mergers will escalate until the situation crystallizes and stabilizes.

There is no indication of the Brotherhood's position on the dispute over the issue of women running in the coming elections. The Brotherhood is determined, as stated in the news, that the lists of the Labor and Liberal parties, in which the Brotherhood will participate, would be free of women running for parliament.

I do not think that anyone in Egypt accepts this idea or this narrow-mindedness after the long struggle of women.

Moreover, the Brotherhood's position on this matter completely negates the principle of the group's founder, the martyr Shaykh Hasan al-Banna.

The group's general spiritual guide, Shaykh al-Banna, left behind five daughters. They are Istishhad, who graduated as a lawyer, Raja, an electrical engineer, and Halah, a doctor who was chosen to be a member of the al-Azhar faculty. All three worked. The remaining 2 daughters, Wafa' and Sana', studied women's education and did not work.

The group's founder urged women to study, and he began with his daughters. Women continue to work, and it is also their right to enter parliament!

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CSO: 4504/150

EGYPT

BRIEFS

ABU GHAZALAH INVITED TO ISRAEL--Informed Arab diplomatic sources said that Field Marshall Abd-al-Halim Abu-Ghazalah, the Egyptian deputy prime minister and minister of defense, has "excused himself" from accepting an invitation to visit Israel in order to hold discussions with Yitzhak Rabin, the Israeli minister of defense, and other military officials, in the framework of a joint committee that would be formed between the two countries in accordance with the Camp David Accords signed in 1979. The sources said that Abu-Ghazalah does not intend, for various reasons, to accept any invitation to visit Israel, especially since he is in the process of making contact with several Arab parties in order to broaden the scope of the weapons industry and military production in Egypt. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 14 Mar 87 p 10] 13292

POWS IN IRAN--High ranking Arab sources have revealed that Iranian officials have recently informed an Arab party that the number of Egyptian prisoners held in Iran as a result of their participation in the fighting at the front in the war with Iraq is much larger than has been officially announced. The Iranians explained that they have several hundred Egyptian prisoners, not 40, as has been said. The Arab source confirmed that al-Sadiq al-Mahdi, the Sudanese prime minister is currently making efforts with the Iranian authorities to obtain the release of these prisoners and that he discussed this topic with President Husni Mubarak during his recent visit to Cairo. [Text] [Paris AL-MUSTAQBAL in Arabic 14 Mar 87 p 10] 13292

CSO: 4504/183

FOREIGN MINISTER DISCUSSES FOREIGN RELATIONS, DOMESTIC ISSUES

Kuwait AL-WATAN in Arabic 19 Feb 87 p 5

[Interview with Al-Sharif Zayn-al-'Abidin, Sudanese deputy prime minister and foreign minister, by Fathi al-Daw Muhammad: "Sudanese deputy prime minister and foreign minister Talks to AL-WATAN; al-Sharif Zayn-al-'Abidin: Sudan Is Insecure Politically, Economically, and in Terms of Borders; Kuwait Islamic Conference Thawed Freeze Between Some Countries; PLO Represents Modern Scientific Arab Mini" in Khartoum; date not specified]

[Text] Khartoum--Al-Sharif Zayn-al-'Abidin, the Sudanese deputy prime minister and foreign minister, said that Sudan is insecure politically, economically, and in terms of its borders. In an interview with AL-WATAN in Khartoum, he said that Sudan's relations with Ethiopia continue to be tense and denied that there is any reason for the delay in al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's visit to Egypt which has been postponed more than once. He emphasized the deep bonds between Sudan and the PLO and said that this organization represents not only the Palestinian but the modern scientific Arab man. Al-Sharif Zayn-al-'Abidin lauded the outcome of the fifth Islamic summit which was convened in Kuwait recently. Following is the text of the interview:

[Question] Sudan has declared its foreign tendency under the canopy of its current democratic system. This tendency is embodied in the policy of nonalignment, positive neutrality, and good-neighbor relations. But we do not believe that good will any longer controls this tendency in a world where neutrality and alignment criteria differ. In your assessment, to what degree have you been able to highlight this role?

[Answer] Sudan has been clad in laws from the time before the policy of positive neutrality and nonalignment was founded. When the country embraced this immortal policy which has been inherited from the makers of the foreign and domestic policy of the old and new Sudan, it found in this policy an antidote to a large degree of international misunderstanding. It also found in it a unique way to utilize international relations which, we believe, survive and grow strong as long as their objective is right and nonaligned. To us, this principle will continue to be the effective motive spurring our foreign policy.

[Question] Relations with Ethiopia continue to be tense and to falter. The Sudanese government has repeatedly pointed out that Ethiopia stands behind the popular rebel movement. In light of this accusation, what has Sudan done in this connection?

[Answer] What we have done is to remain patient, silent, and watchful. These three elements have had their effect recently. In any case, the Ethiopian side has expressed, through its foreign minister who was in Egypt recently, its belief in the principle of initiating a joint dialogue to discuss the issues of concern to the two countries. Sisterly Egypt sent us, through Dr 'Ismat 'Abd-al-majid who hosted the Ethiopian foreign minister, a message to the effect that the Ethiopian side has no objection to reopening a dialogue with Sudan. We have remained patient and watchful because we are confident of our commitment to a firm principle, namely that we do not interfere in neighbouring or sisterly countries out of our belief in a principle adopted by the OAU. This principle continues to extinguish the fires that flare up here and there and in areas which have not observed this principle.

[Question] Now that you have mentioned this, we would like to know development in Sudanese mediation efforts in Chad in light of what Sudan has announced and in light of the outcome of the fifth Islamic summit.

[Answer] Sudan took part in the summit and expressed its willingness to intervene in an attempt to end the outgoing conflict in Chad, regardless of its nature and color. His excellency the prime minister has summoned a committee from Sudan, Nigeria, and Algeria to study this issue.

Dr 'Ali Taj-al-Din, a member of the State Council, is currently engaged in exploratory visits connected with this issue. These visits will be followed by a meeting of the joint committee formed of the three countries first, to find out the nature of the ongoing conflict in Northern Chade and then to intervene with the same principles that emanate from the OAU laws. We hope that these efforts will succeed.

[Question] Have certain countries asked to use Sudan's territories to transport military supplies or aid of any kind to Chad?

[Answer] Numerous countries have made this request, and I hope you will relieve me from mentioning names. However, our reaction has been one of total rejection. Sudan, with its neutrality and its wish not to intensify further the flareup in the area, has rejected all these requests.

[Question] We would like to know if it is true that the United States is one of these countries?

[Answer] I beg you to relieve me from mentioning names.

Egyptian-Sudanese Relations

[Question] Insofar as good-neighbor relations are concerned, numerous political observers have said that the Unionists, the ally party in the government, are emotionally more enthusiastic for the relations with Egypt and that this may somewhat spoil the strategy of al-Unmah Party, the other party in the alliance, for the relations this party seeks with Egypt. What is your opinion?

[Answer] I believe that this is totally unlikely because, first, this is not the first time in which the Democratic Unionist Party, which is well known for its firm relations with Egypt, enters into an alliance with al-Ummah Party. Moreover, the two parties have tackled this issue together several times. Besides, al-Ummah Party does not have toward Egypt sentiments different from those expressed by the Democratic Unionist Party.

Egypt's relations are with all of Sudan, with all its parties, tribes, and ethnic groups. As a government, we all seek to establish a framework for these relations. It is true that we, the Unionists, are distinguished by our desire to rescue these relations from emotional inundation because the emotional appeal has been ringing in the air for decades but has produced nothing of logical value. This is why we want to move these relations to the sphere of objectivity and logic and to subject them to the scientific criteria. As you know, an infant grows attached to nursing and gives up his mother's breast only forcibly. We put these relations within their frameworks and we thank God that they have been recently crowned with the accomplishment of the trade protocol which had been on all our minds and which some people thought would falter strongly. But we have been finally able to achieve this accomplishment and everything is moving peacefully.

[Question] Is there a reason behind the delay of the prime minister's visit to Egypt?

[Answer] There is no reason other than the prime minister's commitments to other visits.

Sudan and Arab Issues

[Question] Sudan expressed its wish to host the PLO headquarters. Does this wish continue to exist?

[Answer] As a government, we are closely bound to the PLO and its chairman, Yasir 'Arafat. This position has never been shaken from the time we were in the opposition to this moment. We and the PLO exert joint efforts. We do not consider the PLO an organization belonging to the Palestinian solely. We go further and believe that the PLO represents the modern scientific Arab man confronting the world problems and the problems engulfing the Arab world. This is why this organization receives all aid from us in Sudan. The PLO truly represents what is happening deep inside us. This is why it represents all of us, not just the Palestinians.

[Question] So is Sudan making efforts to unite the Palestinian ranks?

[Answer] There is no doubt that Sudan is anguished by the division prevailing in this arena. Sudan has good relations with all the factions, including the warring factions, and it tries to narrow the disagreement in its own way.

[Question] What about the ongoing fighting and siege in Lebanon?

[Answer] Sudan declared its clear and explicit position at the Arab foreign ministers meeting in Tunis. It demanded that this bloodshed be ended immediately and it participated strongly in proposing the seven-member committee which visited the camps and the area's Arab countries concerned. This is in addition to our full commitment to the fifth Islamic summit's resolutions on this issue.

[Question] In light of your participation in the Islamic summit, can you tell us about lines that agree or disagree in uniting the Arab ranks?

[Answer] In this summit, the wave of optimism rose to a peak. The element of remoteness planted a sense of difficulty insofar as numerous issues are concerned. The failure to confront the issues made them somewhat difficult. The summit was a historic opportunity (which soon diminished and dwarfed the issues). The freeze existing between some has somewhat thawed. There is no doubt that the summit will be followed by numerous efforts to thaw whatever freeze continues to exist. This is what Kuwait has done by following up on the summit resolution.

[Question] What about Sudan's mediation in the Iraq-Iran war?

[Answer] The summit had, of course, a closed session in which Sudan put forward its special proposal and concept.

[Question] It has been circulated that the Iranian delegation which visited Sudan recently sought to dissuade Sudan from participating in the Islamic summit. How true is this?

[Answer] This did not happen. The delegation came carrying the reasons preventing Iran from taking part in the summit. Despite this, Sudan exerted redoubled and exhaustive efforts to persuade Iran to take part and to present its viewpoint.

[Question] So what is your opinion of Iran's failure to participate?

[Answer] Iran had, of course, its reasons for not participating. The truth is that when the delegation came to Khartoum, it never mentioned non-participation. It only gave reasons.

Democratic Unionist Party

[Question] There are some questions concerning the party's congress. First, we wish to know why this procrastination in convening the congress. This procrastination might not befit the status of a party that is an ally in the government.

[Answer] This delay is for a purpose. Until 6 April, the party as an organization was moving almost too swiftly. It was also the only organization hostile to the defunct regime. After the uprising, it was logical for the party to organize its affairs with its masses in a clear and open manner. This party is enormously popular and, moreover, it has its place in the heart

of the leftist, rightist, and centrist parties because all the parties currently existing in the arena are branches that grew from the national movement's fundamental base embodied in the Democratic Unionist Party. When the party tries to prepare for the congress, it takes all these channels into account. It even takes into consideration Sudan's existence as a whole. You may agree with me that this process requires vast preparation with all the resources. This has been one of the party's concerns since it completed the election campaign which it waged while in detention or in exile. The committee formed to prepare for convocation of the congress have completed their work and the Management Committee recently produced the guidebook on congressional action which is being currently distributed to the provinces. A call will be issued shortly for the formation of basic committees and for the selection of delegates from the various districts. The date of the congress will be then announced.

[Question] It has been reiterated that there are endeavors to unite the Unionists' ranks. How true is this? We also wish to know the nature of these efforts.

[Answer] It is a common mistake that the Unionists' ranks are divided. The Unionists' bond is a principled bond. Moreover, the party has a law governing its method and it believes in its objectives. In an upright individual's life, these things are totally inseparable. The Unionist's belonging is founded on these three bases. But we find at times individuals who are annoyed with the party's principled method, who cannot adapt to the party, and who cannot add to it something new that enables them to live with this method. The Unionist Party enjoys an enormous degree of freedom. Rather its partisan freedom is almost boundless. When this segment of individuals becomes annoyed with all this, it steps aside. This does not mean that the processing has halted or that division has developed in this giant's body.

[Question] Don't you agree with me that the party's reliance on a sectarian base will diminish its future march?

[Answer] This is another common mistake. The party combines, in fact, all the Sufi ways of life which are especially respected here in Sudan. It is true that al-Khatmiyah was the cradle for the party's political moves which were called the national movement. Al-Khatmiyah cooperates with the party and its cooperation is the cooperation of a body belonging to a political organization. Al-Khatmiyah does not carry its Sufist rites to the party and the party moves on, with the Khatmi and the non-Khatmi and with the Muslim and the non-Muslim, including Christians and agnostics.

[Question] How do you view the harmony between the two allied parties in power?

[Answer] Relations between the two allied parties are as firm as can be because their objective is the common national concern. No party excels over the other in this regard. The two parties are fatefully entrusted with carrying this joint responsibility of leading the country to the shore of safety because to date, the country is not secure economically, politically, or in terms of its borders.

[Question] And what is this alliance's future?

[Answer] This is in God's hand, of course.

[Question] What we mean is that there are efforts going on to break up the alliance?

[Answer] These words do not make sense. When one is in charge of three sensitive positions, how can the efforts be coordinated in all this, especially since we have seen hordes of people waiting throughout the 3 days we have frequented this ministry?

I leave it to you to make your judgment on the coordination and division of my efforts on the basis of what you have seen, heard, and witnessed. I have no other comment. [answer as published]

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SUDAN

AL-TAYYIB'S FRIENDSHIP WITH AL-MAHDI ALLEGED

Khartoum AL-RAYAH in Arabic 19 Mar 87 p 2

[Article: "Prior to the May Victory, Why Didn't 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib Arrest al-Sadiq al-Mahdi"]

[Text] The last days of the May regime have not been unveiled yet and, in the flood of victories the Sudanese people have achieved, people were not much interested in the conspiracies hatched in the dark to share power following a coup from within and to impose 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib as president and his understanding with sectarian party leaders to appoint them to the cabinet.

'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib, the number-two man after President al-Numayri, was close to al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and closer yet to the United States. His friendship with al-Sadiq al-Mahdi began right after the national conciliation and lasted until the last days of the May regime. This friendship was forged for political objectives and, therefore, 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib, who shortly before Rajab 15 arrested the political party leaders, did not arrest al-Sadiq al-Mahdi or Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani.

The obvious question is why did security officers arrest Islamic leaders and union leaders and left sectarian leaders in their homes? The answer is clear, for 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib was planning, following al-Numayri's removal from office, to share power with sectarianism.

Dr Malik Husayn, a leading Socialist Union figure and privy to the secrets of those days, says that 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib was thinking of forming a 30-member council under his chairmanship and made up of 10 Ummah Party members, 10 Unionist members, 8 Islamists and Malik Husayn as rapporteur to replace the al-Numayri regime.

Dr Husayn's statements are substantiated by factual evidence, even though we have something to say here about his remark concerning al-Tayyib's wish to include the Islamists in the 30-member council. It is a known fact that al-Tayyib began thinking seriously of a replacement after his return from a visit to Washington and following American vice-President George Bush's visit to Khartoum. It is well known that the first objective of American policy in these and all days was to strike at the Islamic tendency. Therefore, the Americans applied pressure on the May regime and 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib

showed more zeal than al-Numayri himself in arresting Islamic leaders and hence could not think of including them in a 30-member council.

Malik Husayn's story is not the only proof of al-Tayyib's ties to the sectarian leadership to share power behind the backs of the rebellious masses. There is other evidence, the strongest of which is the account of Sayyid Ahmad Khalifah, prominent leader of the al-Mahdi Party, who wrote in SAWT AL-'ARAB newspaper that "he met with 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib who told him that the Americans were refusing to send food to Sudan because al-Numayri had imposed Islamic law. Al-Tayyib assured him of his readiness to return Sudan to the pagan days to release the ships carrying food to a shari'ah-free Sudan."

The question here is what kind of relationship did al-Tayyib have with Sayyid Ahmad Khalifah, the prominent leader in al-Sadiq al-Mahdi's party, to reveal such a serious revelation. And why did all the Ummah Party campaigns led by al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and Sayyid Ahmad Khalifah coincide with al-Tayyib's concessions and reject his realities that say that Islam includes amputation, crucifixion, flogging and stoning, whether the Americans like it or not and whether al-Tayyib, al-Sadiq and Sayyid Khalifah were defeated or not.

Hence, Dr Malik Husayn's statements, Sayyid Ahmad Khalifah's confessions, 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib's attitude of not arresting al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and Muhammad 'Uthman al-Mirghani and the popular demonstrations at their peak are all clear proof that a scheme to share power was being hatched in the dark.

'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib was not loyal to his president, al-Numayri, but rather had his eyes on his seat. As for the leaders of sectarianism, they will not turn down a chance to share power offered to them on a gold platter even though the offerer is accused of resettling the Falasha.

'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib's insistence on getting to the top and thus putting the Sudanese house in order from within in fulfillment of the American conditions to give up the shari'ah has been underscored by the admissions of well-known billionaire 'Adnan Khashuqji to AL-WATAN AL-'ARABI magazine. By virtue of his strong ties to the Americans and the incumbent regime, Khashuqji was aware of the scheme's secrets. He said that al-Tayyib was the one who overthrew Ja'far al-Numayri. This statement, even though it overlooked the Sudanese people's role, pointed to what was being hatched in the dark by foreign and domestic sides to share power.

'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib was optimistic about the success of his scheme up to the last moment and hence did not hasten to leave the country when he had every opportunity to do so by land, sea or air. The man was deceived and instead of becoming the first man of the palace with the sectarian leaders, he turned into a captive in the prisoner's dock and was brought to trial by the uprising's government and he asked for the testimony of the sectarian leaders.

Yes, 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib, beleaguered by justice agencies, asked that al-Sadiq al-Mahdi and Muhammad 'Uthman Mirghani be brought in as witnesses for the defense to explain what they knew about him. And why not since Sayyid Ahmad Khalifah on the pages of the Ummah Party's newspaper has testified that he, al-Tayyib, opposed al-Numayri and the Islam of amputation and crucifixion

and support the Americans' wish to feed the people of Sudan, but only by returning to paganism and, we might add, sectarianism, and there is no difference between those who worship stones, people or cows.

But despite dark conspiracies and attempts by foreign forces to impose an alternative, it has not escaped the unaware that our people are stronger and, therefore, they triumphed on 15 May. One might ask why advocate patience? Sectarianism is back in power and America, as the main headline in al-Mahdi's party newspaper said, is professing support for the current regime in Sudan. But we say, however, that by merely proving the ability of our nation with its popular masses and educated sectors to make revolution means a lot. For foreign surrogation, overt or covert, will surely be exposed and the autocratic state, short or long, will definitely fade away to nothingness.

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SUDAN

BRIEFS

'UMAR AL-TAYYIB'S STATUS--AL-HADAF has learned that a senior executive paid a courtesy visit to the mother of prisoner 'Umar Muhammad al-Tayyib, the deputy of the murderer [al-Numayri], and dispatched one of his close aides to visit prisoner 'Umar's family at their home. On the other hand, an official of the other party paid a friendly visit to 'Umar's family as well. Right after his visit to prisoner 'Umar's mother, the senior executive stated that 'Umar was not responsible for the Falasha evacuation and that all the responsibility fell on fugitive al-Numayri. AL-HADAF confirms the existence of new pressures being applied by an Arab country to release 'Umar, and information in its possession attests to the fact that the next few days will witness preparations for his release for health reasons and medical treatment in an Arab country. [Text] [Khartoum AL-RAYAH in Arabic 19 Mar 87 p 2] 12502

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FOREIGN MINISTER MABROUK DISCUSSES ARMY'S ROLE, ISLAMIC GROUPS

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 21 Feb 87 pp 19-20

[Interview with Hedi Mabrouk, Tunisian minister of foreign affairs, by Salih Zaytun: "Tunisian Foreign Minister Hedi Mabrouk to AL-TADAMUN: Three Not Included in Amnesty, Namely Mzali, Ben Salah, and Guiga"]

[Text] Since taking charge of the Tunisian Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hedi Mabrouk has engaged in a major diplomatic effort and in constant Arab tours aimed at bolstering his country's relations with the Arab homeland. During his latest Gulf tour, our correspondent Salih Zaytun interviewed him in Doha to ask him about the Tunisian situation and about Tunisian-Arab relations.

Hedi Mabrouk's appointment to the post of Tunisian foreign minister within the framework of the fundamental reshuffle, which toppled former Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali and brought to power current Prime Minister Rachid Sfar, has aroused various questions in Arab diplomatic circles which deal more extensively with this man in his capacity as head of Tunisian diplomacy entrusted primarily with bolstering relations with the Arab homeland. Since his return from Paris, where he was his country's ambassador for several years, the man has endeavored ceaselessly to improve Tunisia's Arab image in wake of the reshuffle which took place in the country. He has toured the Arab Maghreb countries and the Arab Gulf countries and has concluded his tours with visits to each of Syria, Iraq, Jordan, and Lebanon.

During his stay in Doha as part of the Gulf tour which he resumed after the Islamic summit, AL-TADAMUN asked the Tunisian foreign minister about the significance of his energetic activity, and he said:

By the mere fact of my appointment to the post of Tunisia's foreign minister, it is axiomatic that I should give priority to contacting the Arab brothers and coordinating with them on the current Arab developments which now require more than ever greater contact and coordination. This activity reflects the instructions of President Bourguiba, who shows extreme interest in relations with sister Arab countries. We do not deny that Tunisia has firm Arab relations and that it is closer in its visualization and positions to the Gulf countries.

[Question] Does this tour have economic dimension?

[Answer] I can say that this tour has no economic dimensions whatsoever and that it has been confined to a political content. This is what I have discussed with the officials in Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, and Bahrain and what I will discuss in the Arab Maghreb and other Arab East countries.

[Question] What motivates this question is the question raised in connection with Tunisia's Arab role in the wake of the latest cabinet reshuffle. We are all aware that Tunisia embraces the Arab League.

[Answer] We in Tunisia continue to believe that we are a part of the Arab nation and that we have the same rights and duties as the other parts of this nation. In confirmation of our rejection of these questions, I am here in Qatar today and I will tour the other Arab countries to reaffirm the policy formulated for Tunisia by President Habib Bourguiba.

[Question] There are those who believe that the current Tunisian cabinet is experiencing internal conflicts.

[Answer] Such rumors excite our appetite for laughter. Brother Rached Sfar and I often hear them and exchange jokes about them while resting from our official duties. I would like to stress here that there is solidarity among the current cabinet members under the leadership of President Bourguiba and the direction of Rached Sfar, who helps us as cabinet members and whom we appreciate for the qualities which he possesses and which qualify him to be the prime minister.

[Question] But there are those who speak of a strong conflict within the Tunisian mosaic.

[Answer] To start with, I object to the word "mosaic" because it reflects the belief that there are numerous and different small pieces bound together within a single slate. I believe that Tunisia is a complete slate which does not contain the mosaic segments you are referring to. As for talking about a strong conflict, such a conflict does not exist at present, and I say the present and not the immediate past. However, I cannot disregard the presence of varied political opinions.

[Question] It is said that the Tunisian army is now preparing for a political role in the country.

[Answer] The Tunisian army has no internal role in Tunisia's political life. I stress this with three no's: no, no, no.

[Question] Then what is the meaning of the enormous armament deal being negotiated with the United States and France?

[Answer] There is no doubt that Tunisia aspires to have a strong army. Such an army needs to be constantly armed with modern weapons because it is the regime's guarantees and the domestic front. In Tunisia, we believe that the strongest weapon is the weapon of national unity.

[Question] Does the army's task include confronting certain external dangers?

[Answer] A fundamental task of any army in the world is to defend the country's borders against any external dangers. We live in a world which groans under the domination of certain forces and under dangers that pose a threat to many of the world's countries. It is foregone conclusion that any country would proceed to protect its territories, to safeguard its sovereignty, and to equip its army with whatever it needs. I believe that if Tunisia's sovereignty is undermined, you will find that all the Tunisians will rise to confront the danger.

[Question] So, is there no longer a Libyan military threat to Tunisia?

[Answer] Why Libya in particular? Our relations with Libya are moving toward relaxation and we do not believe that there continues to be a Libyan danger to us. I wonder: Why should Libya attack Tunisia? It is true that steps were taken in the past against Tunisians but those steps did not reach the level of aggression. In any case, Tunisia, with its current capabilities, is prepared to confront any danger, whatever its source.

[Question] You have perhaps read the message which Mohamed Mzali addressed to Prime Minister Rached Sfar and which AL-TADAMUN published recently. Has this message received any response and is there any possibility that Mzali will be pardoned?

[Answer] We believe that any pardon for Mzali must have its justifications. Such justifications do not exist at present and are unlikely to exist for him and for two other Tunisians, namely Ahmed Ben Salah, who fled from jail and whose issue has ended with the passage of time, and Driss Guiga, the former minister of interior who has demanded to be re-tried because he believes the previous trial took place under the influence of the past political conditions. Excluding these three, there is an amnesty for every politician living outside Tunisia. But I believe that some of these politicians have chosen to stay in Europe for private reasons with which we have nothing to do.

[Question] What about the detainees in Tunisian's prisons?

[Answer] The president recently decided to release nearly 220 prisoners, including some who took part in the bread rebellion and others convicted of crimes connected with the public right.

[Question] Are the Tunisian jails empty of prisoners now?

[Answer] I do not say this. But there is a difference between a general amnesty issued for all detainees and the presence of some prisoners involved in cases of weapons possession or having foreign connections. On the occasion of this question, I wish to draw your attention to the fact that the minister of interior recently received a delegation of the Tunisian League for the Defense of Human Rights which carried with it a list of claims of mistreatment against some detainees. The minister insisted that the names mentioned in the list be brought and questions directly in front of the delegation's members about the claims which were proven to be false.

[Question] Can the Islamic current in Tunisia be considered one of the currents with foreign connections?

[Answer] This is a delicate question and its delicacy emanates from its dealing with the Islamic current. There is a difference in Tunisia between the return to religion and the performance of religious duties as we have inherited them from Islam on the one hand and the phenomenon of westernization which some people want to impose on the spontaneous nature of the general religious feeling. I say that the Tunisians are religious by nature. This element is good for protecting the current generation and spreading Islamic values in Tunisian society. But some brothers want to exploit religion for political purposes and seek to exploit the goodwill of the Tunisians. This is what motivates the government to watch the so-called pious current.

[Question] What about the labor unions?

[Answer] There has been tangible improvement in the conditions of the Tunisian General Federation of Labor since the federation's new management was formed of the various currents, including supporters of the old current. I believe that current Tunisian economic conditions require the comprehensive solidarity of all Tunisians. These unions must confine their activity to the labor sphere and must not be political unions.

[Question] What is your assessment of the Arab situation in light of the Kuwait Islamic summit? Do the possibilities of holding an Arab summit loom in the horizon?

[Answer] There is, of course, a possibility of holding an Arab summit. The Kuwait Islamic summit created a positive climate which will make it easier to hold an Arab summit. We felt at the Islamic summit that some of the past objections obstructing the convocation of the summit, which has been delayed for years, were eliminated. I believe that the time has come to hold an Arab summit by virtue of the existing and worsening conditions and of the danger in the Arab world. Moreover, good signs did surface in Kuwait.

[Question] Is Tunisia expected to host this summit?

[Answer] We have notified the Arab League and the Arab brothers of Tunisia's readiness to host the summit. We urgently advise that this summit be convened speedily and without delay.

[Question] Palestinian Leader Yasir 'Arafat and Tunisian Prime Minister Rached Sfar met recently for the first time. Can we now talk of a new phase in Tunisian-Palestinian relations?

[Answer] That meeting was positive. In it, we reached joint resolutions and we expressed Tunisia's willingness to be a political and information headquarters, for the Palestinian brothers who, we believe, realize that there is no need for armed elements to be present in the Tunisian territories.

[Question] But during the Algerian revolution, you welcomed the Algerian revolutionaries with their weapons.

[Question] Where is this frontline?

[Answer] This is not my affair. We in Tunisia recognize the PLO as a sole legitimate representative, as the Arabs have agreed. We are prepared for any possible contribution.

[Question] But some Arab countries have accepted the Palestinian fighters with their weapons.

[Answer] However, we in Tunisia frankly reject the presence of such weapons, and we do so on agreement with the PLO leadership.

[Question] Do you fear for Tunisia's security from the Palestinian weapons?

[Answer] We fear not for Tunisia but for the Palestinian interest.

[Question] What has been done about the Tunisian passports withdrawn from Palestinians?

[Answer] A Tunisian passport is given only to those who are Tunisian nationals. Therefore, such a passport may not be granted to a non-Tunisian.

[Question] You are undoubtedly aware that some Arab countries have given passports to numerous Palestinians to enable them to overcome their travel problems.

[Answer] But we in Tunisia terminated this action when Tunisian passports were found in numerous operations carried out in Europe. Many of those passports were forged and their real owners were Tunisian workers who had been employed in Libya and who had been expelled before they could get back their passports. Those passports were exploited for foreign operations. We have made this clear to INTERPOL.

[Question] You are a member of the Arab seven-member committee formed to end the camps war. What point have your efforts reached and are you optimistic about ending this war?

[Answer] We have formulated the well-known plan for ending the camps war. But I believe that there are problems which are much bigger than the hopes attached to ending the fighting. This is why I am not optimistic about the plan's future or about a solution to the Lebanese problem generally.

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INFORMATION MINISTER ON CENSORSHIP, BANNING OF PAPERS

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 4-10 Mar 87 pp 20-21

[Interview with Abderrazzak Kefi, Tunisian minister of information, by Nura Fakhuri: "In Interview with Abderrazzak Kefi, Tunisian Minister of Information: 'No Fear for Tunisia or for Its Future; Absolute Freedom Is Just Words and Proof Is What Happened Recently in France and Britain; We Have Told Whole Truth About Mzali's Dismissal and Have Corrected Some Newspapers' Mistakes'" in Tunis; date not specified]

[Text] Abderrazzak Kefi, the Tunisian minister of information, is a man who has lived with the two most important cabinets in Tunisia's modern history: the cabinet of relieved Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali and the current rescue cabinet of Rachid Sfar.

This is why it is important to interview the man who was in the opposition ranks at one time and who has been jailed three times. There are numerous opinions on the Tunisian minister of information, on his personality, and on his proximity to one current or another. The opposition press and its reporters accuse him of having intensified the censorship on them and some rumormongers say he will not last long in Sfar's cabinet. Others characterize him as experienced and diplomatic and assert that he will stay.

In his office in the Ministry of Information and in an atmosphere permeated by the good smell of Tunisian incense, AL-MAJALLAH interviewed Abderrazzak Kefi who denied with considerable spirit all that is rumored about him and about Tunisia. Defining his position briefly, the man said: "My affiliation has never belonged to Mzali or to Sfar. We live in Bourguiba's era."

The interview began with a frank confrontation which Minister Kefi accepted tactfully and responded to in a reciprocal manner.

[Question] It seems that the current Tunisian cabinet members say very little. What, in your opinion, is the reason? The rumors on the political scene say that Hedi Mabrouk, the minister of foreign affairs, has advised against making press statements at the present time because abundant statements were made recently. Moreover, the minister of interior declines to see journalists because of the rumors about the possibility of increasing bread prices in the near future and because of rumors of what will happen at the university. It is

said that Prime Minister Rachid Sfar does not want to say much so that he may not be faulted for what his predecessor had been faulted. Where does the truth lie in what is said about you as an official of this cabinet?

[Answer] The first denial of all that is said is that I am a cabinet member and here I am talking. It may be that the ministers said too much previously. Now, the ministers focus on their work. We want to be brought to account for deeds, not for words. The ministers, each in his field, are required to achieve certain objectives. They will not be brought to account for their statements. The interpretations you find in the street exist only in the imagination of those who offer them or who perhaps wish that the situation is as they describe it. I believe that the person who told you that my colleague the minister of foreign affairs has advocated fewer statements....

[Question] No one person told me what I just said. It is the general climate among the average Tunisians.

[Answer] Tunisian thinking is creative and not without imagination, especially when it comes to such matters. The Tunisian scene is similar to other Arab scenes.

[Question] The pulse of the Tunisian scene reflects a state of anxiety that did not exist previously. As an official in charge of information, it must be that you watch the average Tunisian and listen to him. What is the media's role in alleviating the anxiety and extinguishing the fire?

[Answer] (Interrupting me, the minister reiterated rapidly in a common Tunisian dialect) "There is no fire. There is no fire." The media's role is to tell the truth and to reveal frankly all that happens to the people. This is something we are now in the process of enacting in all the official and unofficial agencies. We have an official press, a partisan press, an independent press, and a specialized press which tackle all the issues. There are, moreover, the foreign media which write about and enter Tunisia. The Tunisian can see and hear these media. We have nothing to hide in Tunisia and we tell the truth as it is. But there are those who have become professional rumormongers. Such people can only live in the climate they create. They exploit the frank words we tell the people about the problems we are experiencing. Tunisia is experiencing economic problems and difficulties which we do not conceal. Perhaps the policy adopted under another circumstance was the policy of concealing the truth. But we do not conceal the truth now and we tell the Tunisian people frankly about the conditions of all the institutions and sectors. We highlight to the people the positive and negative features of these institutions and we try to correct whatever is negative in them. The Tunisian has become accustomed to living beyond his capability and means. We tell him this frankly. This frankness is exploited by some circles.

[Question] Let me again state that this impression has not been formed by "certain circles." I have gone out to the scene and talked to people.

[Answer] It is not enough to roam the streets and talk to three or four people who claim to be speaking in the name of the average Tunisian. The scene is

big. When a certain person wants to express an opinion and does not wish to be cited for the opinion, he attributes this opinion to the average Tunisian and says, "The average Tunisian thinks this and that," because he cannot say that he "thinks this and that."

Normal Problems

[Question] Does all the above mean that the average Tunisian does not suffer from a state of anxiety?

[Answer] No. The average Tunisian feels the same problems we feel. This is normal.

[Question] Last week, public transport users about to pay their bus or tram fares were surprised to find the fares increased without any prior warning. Where was the media in this case?

[Answer] This is not true. The fares were raised last Monday whereas the increase was announced on Saturday evening and the press published the news on Sunday. If the citizen does not wish to turn on his radio or read the papers, then this is not my fault. The official cannot go personally knocking on every citizen's door to tell him the news. My colleague the minister of transport appeared on television and personally explained the reason leading to raising transport fares in the city and outside it. It is very easy to accuse the media of negligence. I do not deny that they are remiss at times. But in this particular case, they were not negligent.

[Question] You are a minister who served in former Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali's cabinet and who is currently serving in Prime Minister Rachid Sfar's cabinet. It seems there is a degree of ambiguity in the two experiences.

[Answer] I am not the only minister to live with the two periods. There is no ambiguity in this case because we, as cabinet ministers, do not live in Mohamed Mzali's era or Rachid Sfar's era. We are Bourguiba's children, we live in Bourguiba's era, we work with Bourguiba, and we live under his leadership and instructions. We are his ministers and he is entitled to choose whomever of his children he wishes to choose.

[Question] How do you assess the two experiences?

[Answer] The change of prime minister was made to give governmental effort a new boost and to introduce a new government program into the sphere of implementation in a manner compatible with the country's current situation. This current situation is, as is well known, the result of several important external factors and of internal factors. I feel that your questions harbor within their folds fear for Tunisia. I say that there should be no fear for Tunisia or for Tunisia's future. Tunisia has men who work with Bourguiba's framework and his numerous directives.

[Question] Numerous newspapers were recently suspended and stopped, the latest being AL-MUSTAQBAL. With what concept is censorship exercised over the local Tunisian press?

[Answer] There is a censorship law and the law does not permit the publication of false reports or the defamation of people's honor and sanctities. It does not permit whatever is likely to cause riots in the country. This law is applied to all papers without exception. Nobody, whomever he may be, may disregard the law. We want Tunisia to be a state of laws and of institutions. But if some people demand that the law be amended and modified, then they must respect the current law until it is amended.

Self-censorship

[Question] Some Tunisian journalists complain of stiffened censorship to the degree that they have begun to exercise self-censorship....

[Answer] The profession's ethics must be safeguarded in order that we may not permit parasites and people from outside the profession to exploit our press and publish whatever they wish.

[Question] Is the Tunisian press free in the sense of the freedom which every journalist aspires to exercise?

[Answer] What is freedom? There is no so-called absolute freedom. Everything belongs to something. What was recently published in a French paper about freedom of the press in France shows that this freedom has become besieged and shackled. This is in France. What about the BBC in Britain and about the police entry into its offices? Absolute freedom is just words.

[Question] But is freedom of the Tunisian press today greater or less than what it was a year ago, for example?

[Answer] The Tunisian press is now taking considerable steps in the area of bolstering the democratic march and the liberties in Tunisia. This is done with the greater maturity of the people of the profession themselves. We encourage the counter opinion. If we examine the newspapers suspended or stopped, we find that this took place for the following reasons: defamation, and obvious defamation at that, or the dissemination of false reports. This is certain and was proven in later days.

[Question] How many newspapers have been suspended recently?

[Answer] AL-TARIQ AL-JADID, AL-MUSTAQBAL, and AL-I'LAM newspapers. The last one will be republished this week.

[Question] So you feel that the Tunisian press is well?

[Answer] The Tunisian press is well and we must exert efforts to make it better than what it is at present.

[Question] In the period when Mzali was relieved from his post, you as minister of information had to confront a difficult situation. How did you deal with this situation?

[Answer] We have not tried to conceal anything. President Bourguiba has taught us not to hide anything and he does not conceal anything from us. We dealt with the situation without embarrassment. We said all that had to be said and we tried to correct what some papers published by writing to them to correct what we deemed to be wrong. We cannot suppress an opinion if the starting point is goodwill.

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FATHIA MZALI DISCUSSES ACCUSATIONS AGAINST HER HUSBAND

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 4-10 Mar 87 pp 22-23

[Interview with Fathia Mzali, wife of ex-Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali, by Nura Fakhuri: "Fathia Mzali, Wife of ex-Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali, Talks to AL-MAJALLAH in First Interview with Press; Fathia Mzali: My Husband's Dismissal Was No Surprise and It Is Better That He Return to Tunisia Now"]

[Text] It is possible for opinions to differ on ex-Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali's dismissal and on his mistakes, ambitions, and "misconduct," as they call these mistakes in Tunisia. It is also possible for opinions to differ on the importance of the role played by Fathia Mzali, Mohamed Mzali's wife, the minister of women's affairs in his cabinet, and the first Tunisian woman to enter the Destour Party's Political Bureau. There are also numerous opinions for or against the change which was made in Tunisia 8 months ago.

The only thing on which no two people disagree is that what happened in Tunisia then has had its impact on a number of families and changed the structure of their lives, their hopes, and their ambitions. One of these families is the family of Mohamed Mzali who fled to Europe, abandoning in a white house in Soukra one of Tunis' suburbs his wife whom some people describe as strong and others describe as a silent woman of few words. He also left behind his son and his son-in-law in jail.

How does Fathia Mzali live nowadays, without a cabinet post, a parliamentary seat, or a partner? Is she under surveillance, as some people say? Is she under guard? Has she collapsed, lost weight, and aged, as the rumors in Tunis say? Has she gotten her passport and when will she leave to join her husband? Will she be permitted to depart? Is she allowed to talk?

AL-MAJALLAH asked a Tunisian official about Fathia Mzali and about the possibility of interviewing her and he said: "My wife saw her in the market a few days ago. She moves freely and if she agrees to talk, then this is her affair." AL-MAJALLAH visited Fathia in her home. The old house guard stood at the garden gate. We saw no other guard. In the room which Tunisia's ex-prime minister had used as his office, Fathia Mzali received us to talk to the press for the first time after a long silence. When the interview was concluded, she said in comment: "They said that I am free and that I can talk to whomever I wish."

This interview with Fathia Mzali is proof that free expression in Tunisia is well, and this is the wager.

[Question] There is no doubt that what has been happening in the past 8 months has subjected your life to obvious change. How have you dealt with this situation, keeping in mind that you are known for being a strong woman? What did the wife, mother, and woman with political experience do when she saw everybody and everything around her change? Have the friends disappeared?

[Answer] (Fathia Mzali did not answer immediately. She looked around her as if summoning up a distant past and then asked with dignified grief:)

Where should I start? The truth is that I can consider what has happened some sort of an earthquake. But because of experience, I can say that what happened was no surprise. We are experienced with people and we understand people's psychology. This is why what happened was not as great as an earthquake. I am aware that the rumors circulated about me said that I experienced a psychological shock and that I was under medical care. I did expect such things to be said. The situation was upgraded quickly and it affected all my family members. All expected the change to have a strong impact on me and to cause me to collapse. But I have had long years of experience with people and my reaction was true to my nature. My knowledge of people lessened the surprise.

[Question] Your nature, it seems, is the nature of a woman who is outwardly strong and who buries her grief and suffering inside her heart. But despite your determination to hold yourself together, your appearance and your voice say a lot.

[Answer] (as if trying to evade the question) What I have felt is that friends have not changed. I had expected all to take a 180-degree turn and to treat me differently after what happened. But nothing of the sort materialized and I do not feel that my friends have changed. Whenever they get the opportunity, they come to visit. I do not feel estranged.

[Question] It is said that people in high positions are usually surrounded by people with interests who hide behind the robes of friendship. What is your opinion?

[Answer] I was aware of the people with interests, despite their endeavors to conceal their ends. I have not asked them for anything so that I may not embarrass them. Their actions may not be 100 percent free. Some of them still contact me to ask me what I need but I prefer not to embarrass them.

[Question] Have you become more introverted since the events? Have you isolated yourself from the world? How does Fathia Mzali live now?

[Answer] I have greater responsibilities now. The children are in greater need of my help and presence, especially in light of what has happened. I do not have much free time. I have to manage the family's financial and material affairs and I have to be home when my grandchildren return from school. Each

of us has his family problems. But what I can say is that even my children's friends have not changed and that I have not experienced a feeling of emptiness or hostility for the past 8 months.

[Question] And what about grief?

[Answer] The children's situation is painful to me. But I continue to hope that this situation must inevitably change.

[Question] There is no doubt that you and your husband had planned for your life, at least in your dreams, something different from what has happened.

[Answer] (She laughed and then went on to say:) We embarked on political action years ago and without planning. For 30 years and from the time before independence, we ran day by day, without planning for our future.

[Question] And without dreams?

[Answer] Our dreams were more social than private and individual. In a country which was in the development stage, our responsibilities were numerous and we were constantly immersed in work. We did not plan for ourselves.

[Question] But one of the most significant faults for which you and your husband have been blamed is ambition. Were your ambitions greater than Tunisia or the Tunisian people could withstand?

[Answer] Meaning social ambitions?

[Question] No, I mean political ambitions.

[Answer] Our country is small and it was in the development stage. Our ambitions were confined to our wish to contribute to improving the situation. The last plan I personally proposed was that we should form a parliamentarians association in Tunisia. I took part in three parliamentary terms and I believed that the parliamentarians can do more and take greater initiative, provided that they are given greater responsibility. We always thought of the possibility of improving the conditions in all the spheres in which we worked. We always looked to the future and believed that it must be better in all areas.

[Question] What do you do these days? Are you still as interested in the political conditions as you were in the past? Do you still read the press which, it is said, you have come to hate?

[Answer] No, not to this degree. But when one of us is in a position of responsibility, one must read the papers daily. Because I have no direct political responsibility now, I do not read the press as much as I used to do in the past.

[Question] Do you go to the markets?

[Answer] Most of my time is devoted to the family members.

[Question] Do you have contacts with your husband?

[Answer] He constantly talks to us by phone.

[Question] Isn't there a problem in this regard?

[Answer] The major problem is to have an audible telephone call.

[Question] When your husband left home, did you bid him farewell with the feeling of a woman who will no longer see her husband? Did you feel fear for him or that years could pass before you would see him again? Did you encourage him to flee, especially since the Tunisian people fault Mzali for fleeing and for not staying in Tunisia to face the situation? As his comrade on the political path and as his wife, did he consult you on his decision?

[Answer] A while after my husband left Tunisia and after I gave the matter careful thought, it became evident to me that his decision to flee Tunisia was the best for him. I have heard people wonder about what could have happened if he had stayed in Tunisia. When I review the events now, I come to the conclusion that it was better for him to flee then and that it is better for him to return now.

Mzali's Return

[Question] Do you wish him to return to Tunisia despite everything he may face?

[Answer] (Smiling as if recalling a recent and soft memory) The first time he talked to me by phone and said, "I am abroad," I asked him: When will you return?

[Question] Is this the right time for his return?

[Answer] I no longer think of the matter. I don't know when the right or wrong time is. When my son is sentenced to a 10-year prison term, then this means that man no longer has value in Tunisia.

[Question] It is said that when President Bourguiba was in Paris, some people tried to bring their views closer to each other out of their wish to effect a reconciliation. Is this true?

[Answer] I have no idea of what happened in Paris.

[Question] What are the final words Mohamed Mzali told you before his departure?

[Answer] I was not home when he left. The last time I saw him was on the morning of that day. I believe that he left the house at about 1330.

[Question] Is it possible that you were not aware of such a serious decision?

[Answer] Perhaps he did not wish to saddle me with the responsibility of such knowledge.

[Question] It is said that you have been able to acquire your passport. How do you see the future and will you join your husband?

[Answer] It is difficult for me to foretell the future. One of the things we are demanding is that we be given back the passports that have been seized. They have seized the passports of all the family members, both young and old and boys and girls. No member of the family can travel now. What we hear from the press and from rumors is that we will be given passports shortly. But these rumors are more than 3 months old. Many people who heard these rumors have come to visit and bid me farewell. The fact is that I have not gotten my passport yet.

Freedom of Movement

[Question] Will you leave if you get your passport?

[Answer] I prefer to have freedom of movement and to travel and come back. This is the problem.

[Question] It is said that a certain country is making efforts to have your passport restored to you.

[Answer] All I know is that Mrs Monique Pelletier, former French minister for the rights of women [minister delegate in charge of family and the female conditions], visited me here in Tunis, saw the situation for herself and promised me to work ceaselessly so that I may get my passport.

[Question] You have familiarized yourself with the charges made against you, against your husband, and against your son. Do you consider the court's sentence to be just?

[Answer] Insofar as my husband is concerned, there is nothing because he has not been tried yet. As for my son, I attended all the court sessions. Generally, the court sentence is not final and we still have the right to appeal.

[Question] Those who have lived closely with you say that Fathia Mzali's fault is that she was very ambitious and that her ambition meshed with Mohamed Mzali's ambition. Now that the storm has subsided, do you at times honestly think of mistakes you have made or are you convinced that your aspirations and your decisions were right and that the engulfing circumstances were not opportune?

[Answer] If I made mistakes, they could try me for them.

[Question] What is meant is a way of thinking and a style of political and social action.

[Answer] (Mrs Mzali paused and moments of silence in which she seemed to be reviewing past and present accounts passed) I have not felt that my tendencies were wrong. What I have been perhaps blamed for is my failure to devote my full time to the family and my interest in politics. But if a person enters a political movement, he undertakes commitments and it is difficult for him to abandon this responsibility. Generally, I took my responsibilities on agreement with the party and Habib Bourguiba.

[Question] Do you have contacts with Habib Bourguiba? Have you tried to contact him since your husband's departure from Tunisia?

[Answer] There are no contacts.

[Question] With what eye does Fathia Mzali view Tunisia now that she is out of power? Is Tunisia well or do you fear for it?

[Answer] (Minutes of silence paralyzed the ongoing interview and Fathia Mzali concluded her first interview with the press with these words) The future is vague, and so is the present. Moreover, I am far from the arena.

Two Days a Week in Jail

When AL-MAJALLAH asked Fathia Mzali how she spends her time, she said: "I have no time. I visit my son-in-law and my son twice a week on Wednesdays and Saturdays. My son-in-law is a prisoner in a common cell in the city jail (9 April Prison, which is close to the Kasba) and my son is jailed in El Roumi Prison in the city of Bizerte in the north."

After her repeated visits to Monastir where the family has a home, Mrs Mzali said: "This year, we will not be able to spend the summer holiday in Monastir. I am thinking of renting the house because I have to stay close to the children."

8494/12379
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TUNISIA

REACTION TO PALESTINIAN CAMP SITUATION CITED

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 21 Feb 87 p 15

[Article by Rashid Khashshanah: "Tunisia: Official Movement and Popular Denunciation of Siege"]

[Text] Tunis--Despite abundant reports of wars and battles which Tunisians hear daily, the siege against the Palestinian camps and the battles that take place around the camps have occupied a special place at both the official and the popular levels. At the official level, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has continued its contacts with the various parties concerned to find out the developments of the situation. This interest reached the top government level when President Bourguiba received PLO Chairman Yasir 'Arafat and expressed to him Tunisia's solidarity with the camps' inhabitants in this difficult period of tribulation. At the popular level, numerous organizations and parties have expressed their strong denunciation of the siege the Amal militias have imposed on the camps and have demanded a clear Arab position denouncing the siege and offering assistance to the Palestinians.

Within this context, AL-TADAMUN has noticed that nearly all the Tunisian papers have devoted prominent space for news of the besieged Palestinian camps and have published editorials stressing that what is happening in Lebanon at present is unprecedented in Arab history or in mankind's past and describing what is happening in the camps as a crime not just against the Palestinians but also against humanity. Al-RA'Y, a widely circulated weekly, said: Starvation is the latest weapon invented by Amal and those who stand behind it in the ferocious war against the Palestinians. The paper added: What is required of the Muslim ulema now is to issue a legal religious opinion--an opinion which does not permit the eating of dead human flesh but which explicitly prohibits the murder and starvation of innocent people and which declares such acts to be atrocious crimes that put those who commit them beyond the circles of faith and of Islam. The paper demanded that the area's countries, especially those closely connected with Amal, put actual pressure on this organization to force it to break up its seige against the camps.

At the level of the Arab popular and professional organizations which have offices in Tunis, AL-TADAMUN has noticed that there are initiatives and moves to assist the camps' inhabitants. Dr Hamouda Ben Slama, secretary general of

the Arab Doctors Federation, announced that consultations are underway between the Arab professional federations' leaderships to set up an agency to coordinate the aid efforts through a single organization and to intervene quickly to help the Palestinians. Dr Ben Slama pointed out that the Arab Doctors Federation has provided aid and drugs through Palestinian organizations, meaning the Palestinian Red Crescent and the Palestinian Doctors and Pharmacists Federation.

At the Arab League, a high-level source assured AL-TADAMUN that Arab League Secretary General Chadli Klibi, who went to Khartoum after attending the proceedings of the Arab Economic and Social Council in Riyadh, follows up on daily developments of the camps situation through the contacts he holds with the PLO leadership and with the Syrian and Lebanese governments.

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UNIVERSITY SITUATION DESCRIBED

Kuwait AL-SIYASAH in Arabic 19 Feb 87 p 25

[Article: "Bourguiba Urges Students To Devote Attention to Their Studies and To Leave Politics Alone; Lending Banks Discuss Rescheduling Tunisian Debts"]

[Text] Tunis--KUNA--Tunisian President Habib Bourguiba yesterday urged his country's cabinet members to take the proper measures to enable the Tunisian University to carry on with its march and its responsibilities securely at a time when riot control vehicles are seen lined up in front of the Tunisian universities.

At a meeting including the prime minister and a number of cabinet members, President Bourguiba stressed that it is necessary that students devote serious and continuous attention to their studies and steer clear of whatever distracts them from these studies and wastes their precious time.

The Tunisian president's statements have come in light of the student strikes which Tunisian University has been witnessing since the beginning of the current academic year. The strikes have reached such a point that civil guard members intervened at times to break up the student demonstrations and gatherings which march in solidarity with brother students arrested by the Tunisian Ministry of Interior.

It has been common to see vehicles of the riot control forces standing in front of college gates, especially in front of the Political Science, Law, and Arts College.

Sentences have also been recently issued against a number of students, some for a 10-year prison term. At times, the Ministry of Interior uses helicopters to watch student movements inside the colleges. Some officials of Tunisian University have expressed the hope that the university will not turn into a strike arena threatening the academic year's progress, as happened last year.

On the other hand, the Paris Club of the World Bank is scheduled to hold a meeting in Paris to examine the Tunisian economy's condition and to study the possibility of rescheduling this Arab country's foreign debts.

The Paris Club includes representatives of the World Bank and of governments and lending institutions, the most important of which are Kuwait, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Qatar. The western countries include the European Community countries, Switzerland, Japan, the United States, and Canada.

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CURRENT POLITICAL, ECONOMIC AFFAIRS DISCUSSED

London AL-MAJALLAH in Arabic 4-10 Mar 87 pp 18-20

[Article by Nura Fakhuri: "Tunisia After 8 Months of Reshuffling: Struggle of Politics and Inflation"]

[Text] Tunisia, whose population has doubled since independence in 1956 (to 7 million now) and 80 percent of whose people were born in the past 30 years, is still a city of youth. Its old gates and beautifully ornamented windows are wide open to all possibilities.

But what does Tunisia wager on and on whom does it wager?

How does it live now that the "storm" has subsided? And has the "storm" subsided?

How does Tunisia solve its problems, how does its youth live, and to what port is it sailing its ship?

AL-MAJALLAH correspondent Nura Fakhuri visited Tunisia and talked to its people and its officials. She interviewed the minister of information and Fathia Mzali, the wife of Tunisia's former prime minister. This is the first interview of its kind. Following is the first part of the outcome of this visit.

Tunisia is living nowadays in the calm that follows the "storm" and it has begun to sigh in relief in the wake of the changes, alterations, and decrees which opened 8 months ago a new crossroad in Tunisia's political life.

The newspaper booths have foreign and Arab magazines and newspapers talking of Tunisia's new experiment of economic reform, of the positive and negative features, of the existing conflicts, and of the opposition. One is surprised how the censor's scissors have not cut out such discussion. This is the proof refuting many of the rumors circulating in Tunisian streets and alleys.

Rumors are a disease that has afflicted the Tunisian scene recently. Part of the affliction emanates from the wish of some people to shake the confidence in the current government and in Tunisia's future and the other part is generated by a latent anxiety and fear of what may happen. The average Tunisian raises

numerous questions currently, some politically, some centered on the succession, and some created by the economic crisis. An example of such questions which some people exploit and turn into rumors is a news report published 2 weeks ago by the official and private press with a photograph of Saida Sassi, President Bourguiba's niece and the "strong woman" who is said to be controlling part of the political game in Tunisia at present.

The report says that Mrs Sassi received the wife of U.S. Ambassador Peter Stevens to bid her farewell in the wake of the decision to recall her husband to Washington. This report was a surprise to the Tunisian press and public opinion. Despite everything said about Saida Sassi, her activities had not been reported in the press for 8 months and she had not taken part in any public function.

Why was this report published? What is Saida Sassi's current role? Does Saida Sassi form a political tendency in Tunisia's public life? Is she the political alternative to what "al-Majidah" represented?

These are questions raised by average Tunisians, some of whom believe that Saida Sassi has not only taken Wassila Bourguiba's place in tending the president but has also taken part in creating a current with certain tendencies within Carthage Palace, with help from Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, the minister of interior; Mansour Skhiri, the minister attached to the president and minister of civil service and administrative reform; and a number of ambitious politicians who are close to President Bourguiba and to whose opinions the president lends an attentive ear.

If Saida Sassi and her triangular current have chosen to operate silently, then one of those close to Saida, namely a young parliamentarian and a well-known lawyer whom some consider to be Saida's "spiritual son," has given AL-MAJALLAH an opinion totally contradicting all that is said about Saida Sassi. Saida's main concern is, in this parliamentarian's opinion, to care for her uncle, to support him emotionally, and to tend him like a mother tending her son. She has nothing to do with politics.

About the visit of the U.S. ambassador's wife to Sassi, the young lawyer said with evident surprise: "Saida Sassi was one of the most prominent Tunisian women strugglers during the French colonization and she, like others, took part in liberating the country. But her role remained concealed. Generally, she is a woman who has her social relations, especially in the United States where she held during the French colonization several symposia in which she discussed Tunisia and Tunisian women."

As long as one thing gives rise to another, then what about Wassila Bourguiba and what about the rumors circulating during President Bourguiba's visit to France--rumors to the effect that one of the visit's objectives was to reconcile the couple?

A source very close to President Bourguiba told AL-MAJALLAH: "The idea of reconciliation is groundless. Habib Bourguiba is well known for not backing down on his decisions, regardless of the price."

But it seems that every rule has its exceptions. President Bourguiba, who earlier removed his son from the position of presidential adviser, has recently assigned this son, in addition to his position as chairman of the National Bank's Board of Directors, to make an official visit to Indonesia. It is said that after this visit, the son will visit the United States. Bourguiba has also entrusted his son with the position of chairman of the Regional Information Communications Institute.

Certain Tunisian political circles assured AL-MAJALLAH that Habib Bourguiba will later appoint his son vice president in the hope that he will succeed him one day. These circles say that a decision of this kind will have its significance to and impact on the future of Tunisia where some ministers stress that the succession will take place in accordance with the provisions of Article 51, amended by Article 57, of the constitution. This article states that the prime minister shall assume the position of president.

More Important Problem

If the problem of succession can be settled at any moment by a decree from President Bourguiba, then there is no doubt that the bigger problem--and anxiety over the succession is one of the elements influencing this problem--continues to be the economic problem in Tunisia. The Tunisian citizen is not so much concerned these days with who will be the successor or who is struggling against whom as he is concerned with securing his livelihood and his children's livelihood and with seeing that prices do not rise above their present levels. The Tunisian dinar's purchasing power has declined since the dinar was devalued last year and in the wake of the wave of inflation and of increased prices that have affected most consumer and essential goods.

The new economic reform plan, which went into effect on 9 July 1986 and on which Prime Minister Rachid Sfar has wagered, contains provisions whose implementation will lead to increased economic pressures on the Tunisian citizen in order to save the public economy. The increased pressures include, for example, higher taxes deducted directly from wages, higher transport and fuel prices, and higher prices for oils, foodstuffs, and imported goods. A woman interviewed by AL-MAJALLAH in a public market in Tunisia has said: "I have not gone to the market for 10 days. Today I went to buy some essentials and I was horrified by the rising prices. The price of eggs and of some vegetables has risen. Even the price of toothpaste has increased sharply. They raise all prices, except for bread."

It is worth noting that Tunisia's 1986 inflation rate amounted to 10 percent. Whereas the Tunisians' purchasing power has risen by 15 percent in the past 3 years, the prices have risen by 19 percent. In Tunisia, the price of bread continues to be the "straw which breaks the camel's back," as the Tunisian proverb goes. Tunisia, which experienced the "bread riots" in December 1983, does not wish to repeat the experience even though the numerous rumors the visitor to Tunisia hears say that the successive price increases will inevitably lead to raising bread prices and that such an increase will be made shortly.

Ismail Khelil, the minister of planning and finance who was interviewed by AL-MAJALLAH, said that bread prices will remain as they are, at least for the present. He asserted that if the increase is made in 2 or 3 months, it will not exceed a few mils (a loaf of bread costs 70 mils) and will not be as big as the increase which led to the past riots.

The minister of planning and finance, who visited Saudi Arabia recently to discuss the means of joint cooperation and who is considered one of the most energetic members of Prime Minister Rachid Sfar's cabinet, seems to be confident of Tunisia's ability to confront the economic crisis sweeping the country, as it is sweeping most of the Third and Second World countries. But Ismail Khelil does express his annoyance with the average Tunisian's failure to understand the economic reform program which has begun to bear fruit and his annoyance with the Tunisian citizen's failure to understand that the crisis will be inevitably reflected in every home and that the rescue must come at the expense of austerity. Khelil asserted that the reform program must succeed through the cooperation of all, or else Tunisia will be in danger.

Figures...Figures

The reform program which began 6 months ago a campaign to rescue the Tunisian economy which relies on international and private long-term loans took Minister Khelil to a plenary international economic meeting organized in Paris last week by international and commercial banks in an attempt to bolster the Tunisian economy. On 6 February 1987, Tunisia got foreign aid valued at \$725 million in the form of grants and loans tied to industrial, agricultural, and commercial programs. The aid is distributed as follows: A grant of \$10 million from the Scandinavian countries and a grant of \$5 million from Canada. As for the loans, they are as follows: \$300 million from the World Bank, \$250 million from the IMF, \$100 million from France, \$18 million from Germany, \$15 million from Spain, \$10 million from the United States, and \$2 million from Belgium.

The above figures are of special political significance. France loaned Tunisia 10 times what the United States loaned it. Though Prime Minister Rachid Sfar and Planning and Finance Minister Ismail Khelil are happy with the loans given by the European countries to Tunisia as a sign of confidence in Tunisia's economic future, the Tunisian opposition exploits this borrowing process in its campaign on the means capable of loosening the Tunisian economic crisis.

It seems that Tunisia's economic crisis has become the prime mover of the political axes, be they the ruling party, the opposition, or the labor unions. The Tunisian government has begun to realize the importance of this crisis and the importance of involving the opposition and the other parties in finding a solution. This is what the government did when it invited the opposition parties to participate in the Economic and Social Council with the aim of "bolstering a responsible national dialogue."

Regardless of this invitation's nature, the Tunisian opposition believes that the main cause of the economic crisis is slow agricultural and industrial development. The opposition also believes that nine-tenths of what Tunisia

borrows from abroad and of what it is given in grants are absorbed by Tunisia's past debts. This opposition asserts that the small improvement in the Tunisian economic situation in recent months has come at the expense of increasing Tunisia's foreign debts which will amount to 4.71 billion Tunisian dinars by the end of 1987 compared to 4.15 billion at the end of 1986. This means that Tunisia's debts will consume the equivalent of 60 percent of Tunisia's net public revenue (a dinar equals \$1.15). The opposition also believes that the negative consequences emanating from the new reform program, in case Tunisia fails to fulfill its debt commitments, will fall on the shoulders of the new generation which will be responsible for repaying these debts.

What are the causes of the economic crisis and what are its positive indicators?

The causes, as defined by an expert on the Tunisian economy, are numerous and they include, in his opinion:

- The Tunisian economy's reliance on tourism and its negligence of agriculture and industry.
- The faulty political options that have led to faulty economic policies.
- The international economic crisis.
- The drop in oil prices.
- The state of uncertainty which is being experienced by Tunisia and which, along with other factors, has led to failure to attract foreign, local, and Arab investments.
- The suspension of a number of Arab investment projects.
- An increase of 3 percent in unemployment in the past 5 years, with the number of unemployed amounting to 300,000 Tunisians, including numerous university graduates.
- The return to Tunisia of a large number of Tunisian workers who were employed abroad.

Positive Indicators

Recently surfacing positive economic indicators of a solution to the economic crisis are the following:

- The current tourist year is excellent and most hotels are reserved until the summer's end.
- The agricultural year is good as a result of abundant rains. It is expected that agricultural production will exceed the targeted ceiling of 11.5 million tons and reach 17 million tons.

- Increased foreign support for Tunisia with a number of long-term loans.
- The declaration of war against the so-called "mismanagement."

Despite all the positive indicators, "Green Tunisia," as its people have colored it, or "Blue Tunisia," as the French wanted it to be, continues to experience political anxiety. The citizen fears that the war against "mismanagement" is nothing but a war for the settlement of political scores and that what has happened is the mere replacement of one group by another.

Who will carry the continuity slogan in the future?

There are now several prominent faces in the Tunisia arena. All these figures are trying to find their own place in this arena. Most prominent among them are Habib Bourguiba, Jr., Rachid Sfar, Mohamed Sayah, Hedi Mabrouk, Zine El Abidine Ben Ali, and Hedi Baccouche.

So far, President Bourguiba is still the number one man. Citing Bourguiba, one of the president's close associates said last year: "I still need 7 more years to end my mission." This means, according to the interpretations, that Bourguiba has decided to give up the power in 1993, if God has destined him to live so long.

Daily Living Costs in Tunisia

The prices of foodstuffs and consumer goods have risen in Tunisia recently by varying degrees. AL-MAJALLAH has noticed that the increases are as follows:

	Previously	Currently
Loaf of Bread	0.06 dinar	0.07 dinar
Kg of Sugar	0.27 dinar	0.30 dinar
Four eggs	0.18 dinar	0.30 dinar
Kg of chicken	1.00 dinar	1.40 dinar
Kg of beef	2.80 dinar	3.50 dinar
Kg of lamb	3.80 dinar	5.00 dinar
One liter of edible oil	0.20 dinar	0.26 dinar
One liter of olive oil	0.48 dinar	0.60 dinar
Parsley	0.50 dinar	0.60 dinar
Kg of butter	1.00 dinar	1.50 dinar

The price of a liter of Benzine has risen an average of 0.2 dinar.

As for transport, its cost has risen as follows for a single fare:

	Previously	Currently
A short fare	0.12 dinar	0.14 dinar
A longer fare	0.18 dinar	0.21 dinar
A still longer fare	0.24 dinar	0.28 dinar
A long fare	0.35 dinar	0.40 dinar

It is worth noting that most Tunisians make four trips daily between home and workplace.

Average monthly per-capita income: 120 Tunisian dinars.

A dinar equals \$1.18.

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TUNISIA

EFFORTS TO REGAIN CONFIDENCE OF INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Kuwait AL-RA'Y in Arabic 16 Feb 87 p 9

[Article: "Tunisia Tries To Regain Its Trade and Fiscal Credibility with World's Countries"]

[Text] In just about 6 months, the Tunisian economic rescue program declared by Ismail Khelil, the minister of planning, has been able to satisfy numerous economic partners in the international arena, led by the IMF.

Since Rachid Sfar assumed Tunisia's premiership in the wake of the dismissal of ex-Prime Minister Mohamed Mzali, Tunisia has been able to regain its credibility with the international banks, as the minister of planning and economy said. It has been able to acquire a sum of \$725 million in medium-range loans, including only \$15 million in aid from Canada and the Scandinavian countries. According to a list published recently by the Tunisian Central Bank, the major part of the sum has come as a loan of \$300 million from the World Bank, followed by a loan of \$250 million from the IMF. An Italian loan amounts to \$100 million, a French loan to \$18 million only, and a German loan to \$15 million, which is two times the loan given by Spain. However, the smallest loan came from the United States and has not exceeded \$10 million.

It is to be noted that Japan is the only major industrial country failing to contribute to bolstering the Tunisian government's program to rescue the Tunisian economy. Japan has agreed to only half of the \$50 million loan requested by Tunisia. This has caused the talks to be postponed to another period.

While awaiting the outcome of the meeting which will be held in Paris on 19-20 February 1987 to reschedule Tunisia's debts, Tunisia is trying to gain the confidence of its Arab economic partners in the Arab Gulf to bolster its credibility in the eyes of the international banking institutions, such as the IMF and the World Bank. According to Ismail Khelil's assessment, if matters continue at the current pace, Tunisia will be able to regain its trade and fiscal credibility during the 5-year plan for 1987-91. It will also save enough to repay the debts due according to the new rescheduling which will be approved by another meeting in London next April.

Even though the currently accumulated debts amount to \$7 billion and even though the current 5-year plan relies on foreign loans fundamentally, Tunisia will achieve a very high growth rate of 4 percent, according to the Tunisian Central Bank's estimates.

Moreover, the estimates for this year's agricultural production show that this production will reach a level not achieved for several years and that grain production will amount to nearly 12 million quintars. This figure is not very far from the self-sufficiency figure of 17 million quintars. Moreover, oil sales have risen above the level they had reached in the middle of last year and the price of a barrel of Tunisian oil has risen to nearly \$18.85.

This economic rescue program has not, however, been free of negative economic consequences to the national development, even though it has helped rescue the economy in the short run. The debts which have exceeded a ceiling that is no longer reasonable will force all of this economy's sectors to cooperate just to produce enough to pay for the interest on these loans. It is evident that the loan growth rate has reached 25 percent. This makes the loans consume any economic growth rate, as well as more than 30 percent of the revenues of the country's phosphate, petroleum, and oil exports to the outside world. This is what is actually causing the Tunisian government concern over the medium range.

8494/12379
CSO: 4504/153

MAJOR GENERAL DISCUSSES GULF WAR STRATEGIES

London AL-TADAMUN in Arabic 4 Apr 87 pp 27-28

[Interview with Major General Hamid Ahmad al-Ward, Iraqi military expert, by Ahmad 'Abd-al-Majid: "The American Arms Deal Did Not Overturn the Balance of Forces"; Baghdad, date not given]

[Text] During the years following the outbreak of the Gulf war, military names have become prominent in the Iraqi press. They have discussed the experience, effects, and dimensions of the war and have dealt with the various political events in the context of that experience.

Among these well-known names in Iraq is Major General Hamid Ahmad al-Ward, a military expert who is a professional soldier and holds a position of high technical responsibility in the Iraqi armed forces. In addition to his military writings with a political-strategic slant, he has published during the years of the war seven books on the Iraq-Iran war and the role of President Saddam Husayn in steering it.

Our colleague, Ahmad 'Abd-al-Majid, met Major General Hamid Ahmad al-Ward in Baghdad and asked him a number of questions about military writing and the situation in the battlefield.

[Question] When did you begin your experience as a writer and what are your most prominent works?

[Answer] My experience as a military writer does not predate the war. That may seem a short time, but it is complicated, multi-faceted, and profound. Without doubt, I can say that an experience of this duration is still young or modest in creative yield, at least for me, but what speaks on its behalf is the fact that it is one of the fruits or reflections of the war in our life generally and in the military field in particular.

I have tried to employ my pen in writing on all the subjects and fields that give additional strength to our fight. However, I have devoted my writing more to the field of opposing and uncovering aggression, exposing its effects and dimensions, and to Iraq's role in defending its national experience and its political choice. I have a set of books in print on this subject and another set in press or being completed. The most outstanding of the latter set is "A People Mounted in the Saddle of Glory." It contains a large collection of articles about the war under four headings: the war, the homeland, the leader, and the citizen.

I have also finished an important study of President Saddam Husayn's leadership and his role in mobilizing the people's energies in the battle. It was my contribution to the conference held by al-Bakr University for Higher Military Studies.

Two books are now in press: the first, entitled "The Leader at the Heart of the Battle," is about President Saddam Husayn's experience in leading the fight and the people; the second is a collection of articles I previously published in the Baghdad newspaper AL-THAWRAH about politics, the war, and their dimensions. In another area, and in the context of uncovering the British role in the Iraq-Iran war, the memoirs of Townsend and Colonel R. Evans have come out edited, introduced, and annotated by me. These show the nature of British strategy in the Iraq war.

I also intend to finish a book about espionage in the world and the role of prior knowledge (intelligence) in war.

To tell the truth, in everything I have accomplished I am indebted to President Saddam Husayn for every creative step I have taken on the difficult path of writing. To him is due the credit for actualizing this ceaseless power of creative energy that harmonizes with a combat energy of another sort within the framework of the military organization to which I belong.

[Question] During the years of the war, the military leaders have translated their combat doctrine into outstanding performance in the field. Have military writers drawn on these accomplishments in their creative writings?

[Answer] The experience of creative writing in the military field can be considered one of the important phenomena that has accompanied Iraqi combat activity in the war. It is a reflection of the rays of creative military thought that crystallized the results of the battles and led the steadfastness of our people and forces in them.

In light of this fact, one can say without hesitation that this cultural-professional phenomenon is an indication of how Iraqi creativity strives for continual renewal, a sign of its upward development, and an illustration of its complete consciousness of the specific requirements demanded by long battles. Writing is like any means for deepening the spirit of victory, and increasing the fighting man's ability to perform and absorbing modern fighting methods. This is achieved by means of what military writing provides: a consciousness related to the military doctrine that reflects political doctrine in the field.

To date, military writing has proved its leadership in the field of reflecting the combat successes and field experiences of our forces as they embark upon the fight to defend the soil of the homeland and perform the duty of raising their functions from theory to concrete application stained with blood, sweat, effort, and sacrifices. It has also proved that it is born of an advanced military maturity that springs basically from national ability and purely Iraqi capacity in directing and carrying out the fight and in advancing all its principles.

[Question] Every creative personal experience has an incentive. What was the incentive that moved you to write? What are your comments about some of the writers who have dealt with the war experience or drawn lessons and morals from such experience?

[Answer] To the extent that the subject is related to my personal experience in military writing, I first have to define the necessity that led me to take up this cultural-informational weapon during the battle. Perhaps what one can call the "mobilizedness" of the situation being experienced by our country stands at the forefront of the incentives that deepened my feeling of the importance of employing the verbal weapon to mobilize forces and describe field experiences.

Another necessity that led me to this kind of intellectual creativity was President Saddam Husayn's appeal to the field commanders on a number of occasions that they should utilize their field experiences, translate their lessons, and communicate them to others, in order to promote their technical ability, combat talents, and military skills. This appeal had a great effect in leading many military men to unsheathe their pens and employ them together with their rifles in the fight against the aggression of the Iranian regime.

Despite the breadth of the field of military writing and the diversity of the sources of its impact in the areas of thought and application, I have also found room to write in the political and economic field occasionally. I think the interrelationship among these fields is very natural in light of the comprehensive battle on which our country and people are embarking against an enemy that is targeting the Arab spiritual resurgence in general, as well as targeting the resurgence experience in Iraq.

In addition, the sum total of what I have written falls under a well-known saying of President Saddam Husayn: "Any special domain that does not rest on a well-rounded education has a smaller role in shaping life and influencing its various aspects than one that is born of [such] education or framed in its context." Thus, if the military writer who practices the art of war as a profession employs his intellectual creativity well in writing and journalism, he will be marked by qualifications and knowledge which cannot be attributed to other writers who depend in their methods on physical and mental experiences relatively far from the sweat and blood of the field and from the direct experience and details of the exceptional event--I mean the battle--probably do not have.

It is perhaps this direct experience in itself that opens a wide field for the enrichment and increase of theoretical and practical experience, thus supplying the writer with information, knowledge, and living experiences that enrich the content of his works and broaden the horizons of the readers who are in contact with him. Above and beyond this, being a soldier by profession and dealing with the contexts and some of the theoretical and field demands of the profession surrounds the military writer's subjects with a characteristic knowledge of certain essential realities whose maturity and abundance are one of the factors which tip the balance in favor of our strength and which indicate our ability and resoluteness. I personally have benefited from the

exceptional advantages of this reality in my writings by avoiding all indulgence in speculation and predictions not based on reality. This is a trap into which some writers, especially those who write in the political field, unfortunately fall. I have always moved in the creative direction that holds reality in sacred esteem, and profits from its mental and overall impression, whether in relation to the soldier in the armed forces or in relation to the other citizens, who consider the armed forces the fence around their country and security.

[Question] Do you think the American-Israeli arms deal with Iran will influence the balance of the military conflict between Iraq and Iran? How do you define your view on the question of deciding the conflict militarily?

[Answer] In practice, this deal merely reflects the fact that the circles interested in the continuation of the war are disquieted by the victory of an Arab power which for the last 6 years they have been trying to prevent or distract from performing its national mission in the conflict with Israel. The deal implicitly confirms the fact that these circles admit Iraq's superiority and the possibility of an Iranian defeat in the near future. Perhaps they thought that supplying the Iranian forces with weapons would lengthen the period during which they could play their assigned role in keeping Iraq busy and draining its human and material strength. The aftermath of the deal confirms the fact that all the powers are convinced that the strategic superiority lies with Iraq, in view of the effectiveness of air operations and air force missions deep within Iran.

On the subject of a military resolution, it is a proposition often repeated by Iranian officials, but the facts have proven that it is futile and doomed to failure. The way of peace is probably the shortest and easiest path, if the Iranians are thinking of a solution, especially since Iraq is clear in its principles and always welcomes negotiations.

Otherwise, the Iranians will continue to knock their heads against the wall, reaping no result but destruction, bloodshed, and defeat. Perhaps the strategically significant air strikes that Iraq has aimed at Iranian economic installations are sufficient proof that Iraq will exercise its right to respond to the strategy of prolonging the war and will do so in a way appropriate to the many phases of the battle. The strikes also confirm the precision with which the strategy of pursuing vital targets, whether economic or military, deep within Iran is being translated into action.

Really, I ridicule the logic that considers the recent arms deal to Iran something that might overturn the balance of the conflict. If all the other deals with Iran, starting with 1980, were unable to achieve any important Iranian foothold on Iraqi soil, how can a new deal restore the morale of the Iranian forces, now that they are defeated mentally and in the field, especially at a time when such extensive loss has been substantiated by the Iranian economy that feeds the war machine or perpetuates the Iranian war effort?

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CHINA REPORTS SIGNIFICANT TALKS HELD

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 29 Mar 87 pp 1, 8

[Article compiled from reports by David Landau, Walter Ruby, and agency dispatches]

[Text]

China's official announcement yesterday that a high-level meeting had taken place between Chinese and Israeli officials was greeted in Hongkong as a significant development in the two countries' delicate relationship.

Diplomats and other China-watchers stressed that the Xinhua news agency report of the meeting was unprecedented. The meeting itself is believed not to be the first of its kind.

Xinhua reported, on its Chinese-language service, that Foreign Ministry Director-General Avraham Tamir met with the Chinese permanent representative to the UN, Li Luye, at UN headquarters in New York on Friday.

The Chinese agency and the Israeli spokesman at the UN said the talks focused on Middle East peace efforts and a possible international peace conference.

"It was in a UN context rather than a bilateral context, and one of a series of meetings being held with members of the Security Council," Israeli UN spokesman Eyal Arad said.

The meeting was held at Israel's initiative and was arranged by the two countries' UN missions, he added.

Arad said although Israel was the seventh country to recognize the Peking government following the 1949 Communist revolution in Chi-

na, the two countries had never established diplomatic relations.

Israel has shown growing interest in establishing diplomatic ties with China in recent years, and there have been reports of trade contracts through third countries.

Also taking part in Friday's meeting between Li and Tamir were Avi Primor, deputy director-general of the Foreign Ministry in charge of African and Asian affairs and Israeli UN ambassador Binyamin Netanyahu.

The Xinhua report said:

"Israel requested to meet with representatives of the permanent members of the Security Council, including China." The Chinese agency thus carefully set the encounter within a UN framework.

"Tamir and Li discussed the Middle East situation at UN headquarters. Li explained China's positions on the Middle East - that it supports an international peace conference on the Middle East under UN auspices and that the PLO is entitled to take part in such a conference."

The reference to an international conference must be especially gratifying to Tamir and to his minister, Peres, who has long advocated this approach to peacemaking.

But Prime Minister Shamir expressed "displeasure" yesterday over recent moves by Foreign Ministry officials aimed at setting up an international peace conference.

Interviewed by Israel Radio, Shamir referred to the "campaign led by

senior Foreign Ministry officials currently abroad to promote an international conference."

He stressed that the government "had not endorsed and has never accepted" such a move.

Government sources in Jerusalem said yesterday that the Tamir-Li meeting indicated that China had not changed its traditional positions on Israel and the Middle East.

According to the preliminary report received last night in Jerusalem, it seems that the Chinese diplomat did not mention the possibility of establishing formal ties with Israel.

But Foreign Ministry officials said they hoped that the meeting would open the door for additional public contacts between the two countries. They added that the Chinese had made the meeting public because they did not want to be left behind the Soviets if talks on a conference take a practical turn.

Peres, meeting with visiting Japanese reporters on Friday, said Israel still insisted that China and the Soviet Union establish ties with it as a condition for taking part in a peace conference.

Asked in an Israel Radio interview if a breakthrough on ties was near, Peres replied: "Not yet. We are conducting what is called softening-up activity."

Meanwhile, commentators in Hongkong stressed the importance of China's official announcement of the meeting.

"They need not have reported the meeting," said Yao Shingbun, China editor of the *Hongkong Standard*. "The fact that they chose to do so is certainly significant."

David Chen, China editor of the prestigious *South China Morning Post*, said Beijing's action "indicates China's willingness to take steps towards improving relations with Israel - although those steps may not bring full diplomatic ties."

He said the relationship was simi-

lar to an earlier stage of the dialogue between Beijing and Seoul which, after years of gradually intensifying commercial and informal political contacts, had led to a broad spectrum of pragmatic ties.

But just as China's links with North Korea precluded, in its view, full normalization with South Korea, said Chen, China still believed its large Moslem minority was reason enough to rule out full ties with Israel.

Diplomatic observers here emphasize China's self-perception as the leader of the nonaligned world as the major factor inhibiting its relationship with Israel.

Hence, these observers said, Beijing's effort to couch this latest development within the UN context - so as not to rattle important Third World states.

Informed sources told *The Jerusalem Post* that the meeting had been "in the works" for some time and the timing had been determined by the Chinese.

Wolf Blitzer adds:

U.S. officials yesterday welcomed China's decision to openly acknowledge its latest diplomatic exchange with Israel. "It certainly is an important development," a State Department source said. "It's a good sign."

Michael Zlotowski adds from Paris:

Israeli scientists and sportsmen will be allowed to enter China, but only if they are invited within the framework of an internationally organized conference or competition.

This was announced here by Chinese Ambassador Zhou Jue, and was confirmed to *The Post* by a spokesman at the Chinese Embassy.

"Your researchers and sportsmen will be able to come over for international events, provided Israel is a member of the organizing international body," said the spokesman.

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MINIMUM WAGE LAW PASSED

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 31 Mar 87 p 1

[Article by Dvorah Getzler]

[Text]

A 20-year struggle ended in a muted triumph yesterday as the Knesset unanimously passed a law providing for a fixed minimum wage set at 45 per cent of the average wage. Voting on the bill drew a large attendance of some 80 MKs, including a handful of ministers.

The law's chief sponsor, Alignment MK Ora Namir, chairman of the Knesset's Labour and Social Affairs Committee, described the law as the "jewel in the crown of Israel's wide-ranging social legislation," and Deputy Speaker Dov Ben-Meir greeted the law's passage as "a great day in the history of our efforts to protect the weak in our

midst."

However, many MKs, Namir included, were angry with the Treasury for "emasculating the law," as one lobbyist termed it.

Finance Minister Moshe Nissim insisted yesterday during day-long negotiations that in assessing the salaries of low paid workers the sums they earn as premiums be counted as an integral part of their salaries. That move will drastically cut the number of workers who will benefit from the new law.

The law is to be implemented only gradually. As of next month, the minimum wage will be NIS 525 per month. A second instalment of the rise is to be paid in October, when

wages will be brought up to NIS 551. Thereafter, the minimum wage will be linked to the cost of living index, to basic salary agreements, and to any other fixed increments granted in the economy.

Lobbying hard against the law were industrialists who head traditional low-wage enterprises such as textiles and clothing.

The weapon they wielded in their battle with the Finance Ministry was the threat to breach the package deal on wages and prices on which the stability of the economy is based.

Nissim's insistence that premiums be counted as part of the salaries of the lowest paid workers was his concession to them.

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ATTRACTIVE INTEREST RATES ENCOURAGE FOREIGN INVESTORS

Jerusalem THE JERUSALEM POST in English 2 Apr 87 p 1

[Article by Avi Temkin]

[Text]

Private investors have brought some \$80m.-\$100m. a month into Israel in recent months to take advantage of the high domestic interest rates, *The Jerusalem Post* has learned.

Sources in the financial system told *The Post* that these sums have not only yielded large capital gains for the investors involved, but have also created a monetary flood, which has ruined the Bank of Israel's plans to exercise monetary control.

According to the sources, the central bank has lost almost all control over monetary developments in the past few weeks. The sums from abroad were converted into shekels and invested in short-term shekel deposits and Treasury bills, which carry a very high rate of interest. As a result the commercial banks have for some weeks now been flooded with shekels, far in excess of the legal minimum liquidity requirements.

The commercial banks have in recent weeks returned to the central bank the monetary loans the latter granted them. The interest charged on these loans is the main instrument used by the Bank of Israel to exercise control over banking credits, since by increasing interest rates on the loans the Bank of Israel limits the banks' lending and encourages them to look for deposits.

"The main tool of monetary policy is now gone," the sources said, and

"the banks are so flooded with funds that they can expand lending by as much as they want."

The Bank of Israel, the sources added, will now be forced to rely on open market operations, selling government bonds it holds to mop up some of the large sums pouring into the financial system. But the sources said that eventually the central bank will be forced to reduce interest rates to discourage further short-term capital imports, even if the official figures for banking credits show that they continue to grow. The Bank of Israel has stressed several times that it will cut rates only after the borrowing volume is reduced.

The sources also indicated the Bank of Israel's inability to control the money flood from abroad had offset some of the restraining effects of fiscal policy. According to figures released yesterday by Deputy Finance Minister Adi Amorai, the government ended fiscal year 1986/87 with a surplus of revenue over spending of some NIS 1.2 billion and absorbed from the public some NIS 1.1b.

Amorai said that the public in recent months invested some NIS 370 million in short-term Treasury bills, most of them maturing in three months. He did not state the source of these funds, but apparently they are part of the money brought from abroad and in part reflect the sale of foreign currency that had been hoarded by the public.

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MINISTER DEFENDS MILITARY LOANS, NAM STATUS

Lahore THE PAKISTAN TIMES in English 18 Apr 87 p 4

[Text]

ISLAMABAD, April 16: The Movement. A number of other Minister of State for Foreign countries which are known to have Affairs, Mr. Zain Noorani, said Soviet bases also enjoy the same here today Pakistan Government status, he added.

was strictly following a non-aligned and balanced foreign policy conforming to five-point development programme launched by the Prime Minister, Mr. Mohammad Khan Junejo.

He was talking to PPI on his visit to the Central Secretariat of Pakistan Muslim League. While reviewing the five-point programme of the Pakistan Muslim League regarding the foreign policy, Mr. Zain Noorani said "in our pursuit for security, we are not prepared to compromise the non-aligned orientation of our policy."

He, however, pointed out that the fact that Pakistan has accepted credits for military purposes from the United States was seen by some quarters as impairing Pakistan non-aligned credentials. Such criticism betrayed lack of knowledge about the Non-Aligned Movement and absence of realism in understanding of the international relations, Mr. Noorani added.

In reply to a question, he said the criteria for Non-Aligned Movement was non-participation in the military alliance. It does not preclude other relationships. This was why countries having treaties with the Soviet Union with military implications, were part of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Citing the example of neighbourly Afghanistan Mr. Zain Noorani said there were over 20,000 military troops of a super power on Afghanistan soil, but still this country continues to be a member of Non-Aligned

He observed on the other hand, there are many protagonists of Non-Aligned Movement who have not been able to take a position of principle on Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in deference to their dependence on the Soviet Union.

—PPI.

NORTHERN AREAS' DEMAND FOR REPRESENTATION SUPPORTED

Lahore VIEWPOINT in English 2 Apr 87 p 8

[Text]

MUTED PROTEST has been heard frequently over the years from the people of the geographically-designated Northern Areas, calling for a democratic polity, better definition of the status of their homeland, and regularisation of its relationship with Pakistan.

Of late their voice has acquired greater strength through the establishment of the Karakoram National Movement which claims to reflect the aspirations of the people of Gilgit, Baltistan, Diamir, and other parts of the region. At its first convention, the organization's spokesperson, Malika Baltistani, reiterated the demand that the region should be moulded into a full-fledged province, with all necessary appurtenances, and that the people should be granted constitutional rights as equal citizens of the State. Otherwise, she said, the KNM would launch a movement to agitate for their demands.

The grievance

The constant complaint of the people of this area that they have been

ignored since the creation of Pakistan, to say, as the present Administrator said recently on his first tour of the area, that the Pakistan Government had made substantial outlays for improving living standards, and that it was doing its best to bring the region up to a par with the rest of the country through socio-economic development programmes. Even if such official claims were not contradicted by the grinding poverty which continues to afflict the vast majority of the people, such bureaucratic show of concern for public welfare is no substitute for self-government. It is essential, therefore, that the Northern Areas should be given a governmental set-up that will be in consonance with their wishes.

This amounts to very little, hence the people's disaffection is perfectly understandable. It is not enough

If legal hair-splitters consider that the continued disputation with India stands in the way of allowing political progress, let the democratic dispensation be described as provisional; after all, if a bureaucratic set-up can be treated as authorized and legal, there is no reason why a system backed by the people should not be accorded equal or greater validity.

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CSO: 4600/208

OPPOSITION ASSEMBLY MEMBER'S MOVE TO MUSLIM LEAGUE VIEWED

Lahore VIEWPOINT in English 2 Apr 87 p 34

[Text]

HAJI SAIFULLAH's transferring himself from the parliamentary opposition group to the treasury benches isn't really much of a surprise. The dividing line between the two sides of the House has always been mostly a notional one. The links that joined them were far stronger than anything that set them apart. They had all participated in the election that the political elements in the country had in unison boycotted: they were thus together in endorsing the order that others had rejected - the Zia referendum, the non-party election, the 8th constitutional amendment, the works. They have all since had a vested interest in the political status quo. The more the latter now comes under pressure the more they are likely to reach for one another's hands, even across the aisle.

Of course a parliamentary opposition also has to be maintained. Without that democracy wouldn't be very credible. In fact it is a bit odd that among the reasons he gave for joining the official party, the Haji claimed that he was motivated by the desire to strengthen the democratic process. Surely, the democratic process isn't served by weakening what opposition there is? Mr. Saifullah also claimed to have been greatly impressed by the discipline in the Muslim League -- reflected in their voting together on such a momentous measure as the 10th amendment! He doesn't apparently know much about what has been happening in the party in Punjab. Even at the centre a better test of party discipline would have come had the official opposition to lifting the bar against the crossing of floor been less unrelenting. A situation in which Mr. Saifullah can join the comfortable ranks of the Muslim League at will while anyone considering a reverse journey can take it only at the cost of his membership of the Assembly does not indicate an abundance of confidence on the part of the majority party, does it? The neo-convert's reasons are thus not very convincing. He needn't have bothered. Anyone walking from the chill in the opposition to the warmth of the official embrace need not offer any. -- THE FRONTIER POST, March 26.

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END